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Summer Camp Research Staff Survey

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Summer Camp Research Staff Survey

John Hancock Center for Youth and Family Ministry Research Report

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North American Division - Summer Camp Ministries & the Center for Church Growth

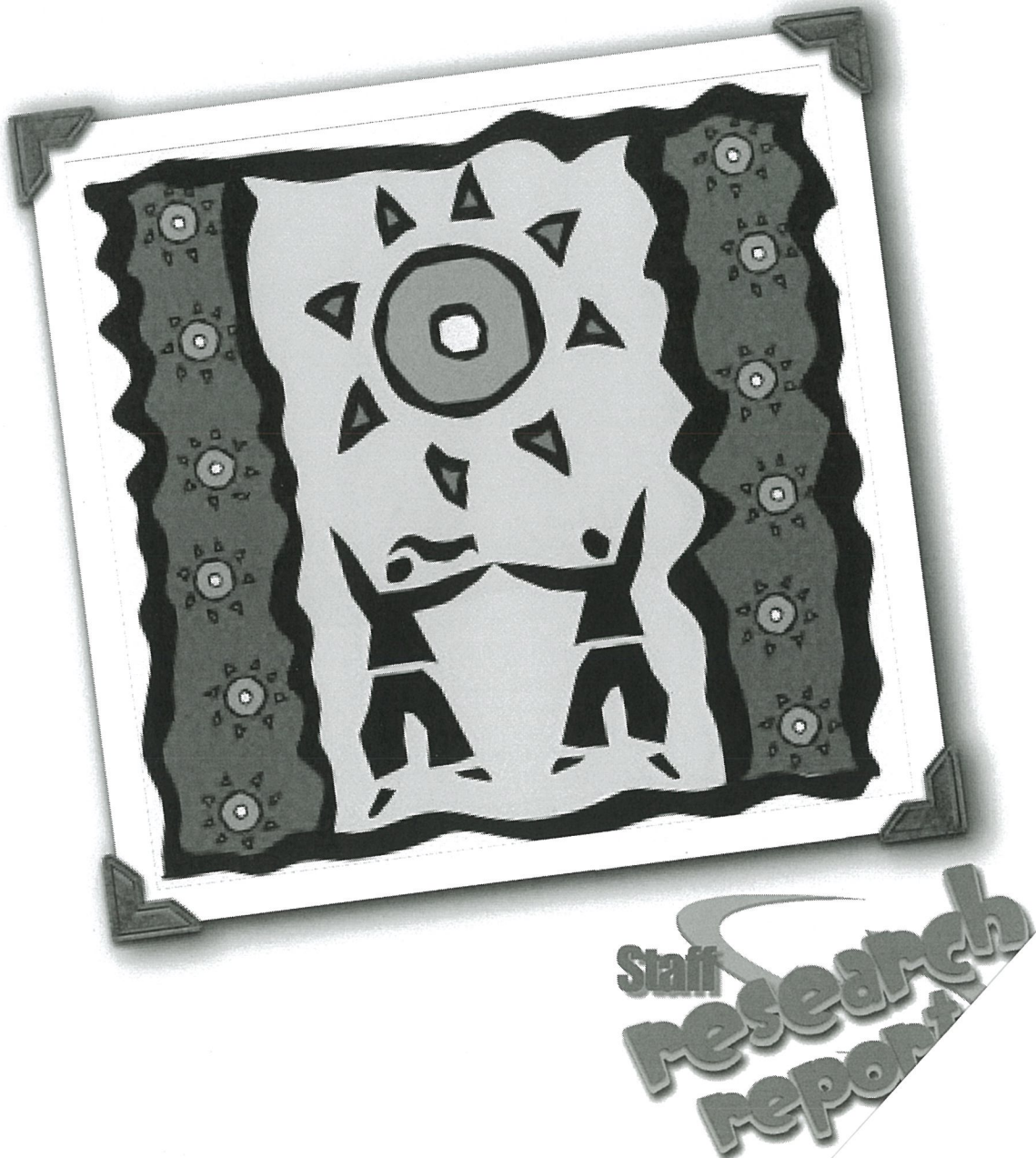




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Summer Camp Staff Survey

A report on the current and alumni staff of summer camps in the Adventist Church

RESEARCH REPORT #2



Building Spiritual Youth • Growing Biblical Values • Sharing Jesus' Love

Staff Research Report

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, summer camps in the Seventh-day Adventist Church have provided an opportunity for young people to become involved in ministry with children and youth on a first-hand basis. Summer camps have employed hundreds, if not thousands, of young people learning all types of skills. It was the purpose of this part of the Summer Camp research to see the influence of summer camp employment and volunteerism on the personal growth of staff and alumni staff.

“I realized that impacting people’s lives for Christ is the most important thing in the world.”



AN IMPORTANT MINISTRY

We’ve always believed that summer camp attachment provided an important bridge between the challenges of older adolescence and the awakening of understanding the real world. It was our research assumption that employment at summer camp provides an important identity forming resource and builds personal spiritual commitment, as well as helps clarify the career focus in later years. We were

encouraged at the participation level of the staff and former staff at summer camps. Over 600 participants formed the bulk of the responses provided to you from our staff research. A number of questions posited open-ended answers and in these eight questions over 1500 responses were logged on our website. A complete listing of these responses is available for your review by request to hcyfm@lasierra.edu. A PDF file has been created with the total responses.

“I wanted to make a difference in our church! Working at camp showed me it is possible.”



STUDY DESIGN AND METHODS

This is a report about how certain aspects of summer camp staff involvement impact a number of life cycle concerns. The Summer Camp Staff Survey project initiated in 2008 was a study of the impact of staff involvement on attitudes toward personal spirituality, the involvement in the local church, and future plans. These areas coordinated the relationship of staff involvement with the following:

- Attitudes towards personal spiritual growth
- Decisions regarding gifts and talents
- Implications for career choices
- Commitment to Adventism
- Relationship with Jesus Christ
- Feelings about Adventism
- Impact of staff involvement with relationship to Christ
- Impact of staff involvement in local church activities
- Participation in local congregational life
- Value of staff involvement in summer camps
- Attitudes towards future employment in the Adventist church
- Anecdotes regarding staff experience
- Counsel for future employees
- Advice for those considering staff positions

The purpose of the Summer Camp Staff Project (SCSP) is to research the shape and influence of both volunteer and paid employment on the lives of both current and alumni staff at Seventh-day Adventist summer camps in the North American Division; to identify effective practices in the religious, moral and social formation of the lives of those staff members; to describe the extent and perceived effectiveness of the camp staff experience and enumerate the positive and negative impact of that service to the church; and to foster an informed denominational discussion about the value and influence on religion and spiritual life of those lives in order to encourage sustained reflection about and rethinking of our formations, outcomes, ministry and institutional practices with regards to staff relations.

The SCSP was begun in October of 2008 and extended through the use of an on-line survey through January of 2009. Email and snail mail addresses were gathered during the third quarter of 2008 and a total of 794 contact addresses were obtained of both current and former staff of the twenty-two study camps in the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists¹ and was conducted by invitation only. In addition to current staff, invitations were sent via letter and email to alumni staff members as identified by conference youth directors, camp directors, and via invitations in nine public meetings in churches or during youth leadership events held in California (2), Alabama (1), Colorado (1), Oregon (2), Texas (1), Ohio (1), Georgia (1). A total of 486 individuals participated in the SCSP. The response was gratifying for a total of 61% of the possible respondents. It was obvious to those reading the respondents' comments that they were both interested in and enthusiastic about their involvement in their staff roles and their survey participation as well.

● **"Before camp I was kind of going back and forth between believing and God and not. after seeing everything he did for me because of camp I am sure there is a God."**

The SCSP was available on the World Wide Web at www.surveymonkey.com and all answers were tabulated both by the on-line analysis provided by the Web site and by the Hancock Center for Youth and Family Ministry at La Sierra University. The content analysis was coordinated by the M.Div. and undergraduate majors at the School of Religion of La Sierra University and validated by a group of researchers at the university in reviewing their content categories for all "write-in" responses.

In summary, the SCSP survey may be assumed to provide a nationally representative picture of the current staff and alumni staff perceptions of their summer camp experience and how that experience may or may not have changed during the following year(s) after their camp experience. For more information on the research design, sampling, and data collection process, or to view the on-line survey questionnaires, please visit www.hancockcenter.org and follow the link to the camp-on-line survey page.



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In this report, we examined the responses of the complete staff survey. In our first and preliminary report entitled UPDATE #1, from December, 2008 we introduced this research and shared some of the on-going research at that time. Now that our staff research is finalized, this report will serve as a complete

¹ The summer camps in the NAD that were selected provided a balanced look at the camping opportunities in the United States and Canada during the 2008 camp season. Those selected included the following summer camps: Camp Cherokee (New York Conference), Camp Winnekeag (Southern New England Conference), Mt. Aetna Summer Camp (Chesapeake Conference), Laurel Lake Camp (Pennsylvania Conference), Camp Pugwash (Maritime Conference), Camp Frenda (Ontario Conference), Timber Ridge Camp (Indiana Conference), Camp Wakonda (Wisconsin Conference), Camp MiVoden (Upper Columbia Conference), Sunset Lake Camp (Washington Conference), Big Lake Youth Camp (Oregon Conference), Leoni Meadows (Northern California Conference), Pine Springs Ranch (Southeastern California Conference), Camp Kulaqua (Florida Conference), Indian Creek Camp (Kentucky-Tennessee Conference), Camp Yorktown Bay (Arkansas-Louisiana Conference), glacier View Ranch (Rocky Mountain Conference), Camp Heritage (Iowa-Missouri Conference), Camp Victory Lake (Northeastern Conference), Camp High Point (Central States Conference), Camp Danny Davis (Northeastern Conference), Camp Lone Star (Southeastern Conference).

analysis of the data collected. In a close look at the responses of this research we have discovered the importance of the summer camp staff experience. In this report we round off the percentages to the nearest whole numbers and due to this fact often the totals do not add up to an even 100%. This is due to the various percentages of responses.

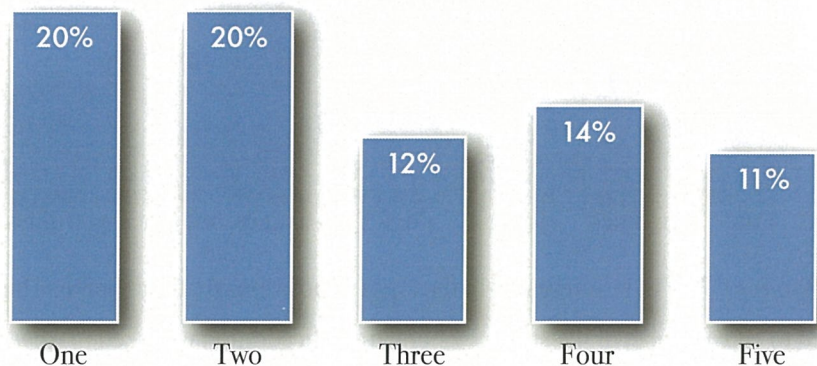


WHO WERE THE STAFF WE SURVEYED?

In this section, we discuss the demographic information provided by the on-line surveys. The total responses from the 629 participants vary since some did not answer every question. But the general descriptions of those who participated provides an interesting perspective on the current and future lives of the staff members who have **"Kids meet God here!"** populated our summer camps during 2008 and in the past.

Continuos Camp Service. 45% of those that participated in this research described themselves as current summer camp staffers for 2008 in contrast to another 57% who considered themselves staff alumni. Surprisingly, of that first group only 1% had never worked at camp before as camp staff members. The chart below identifies their participation in previous camp experience and includes both 2008 camp staff and alumni camp participants. It is clear that the majority of sumer camp staff are what we might call "repeaters." Multiple years is the norm for Adventist summer camp staffers.

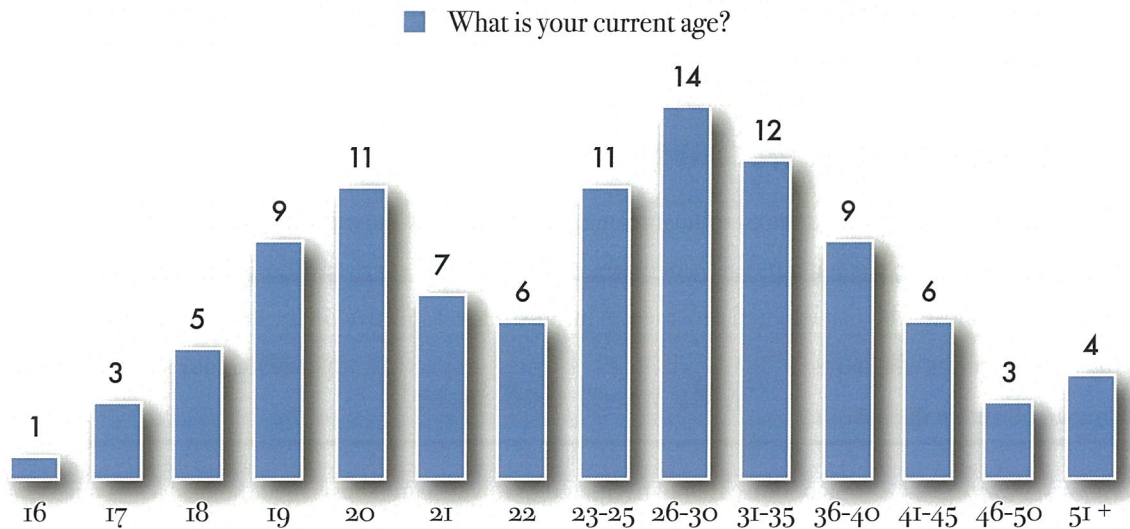
■ How many times (summers-whole or in part) have your worked as a staff member at a summer camp:



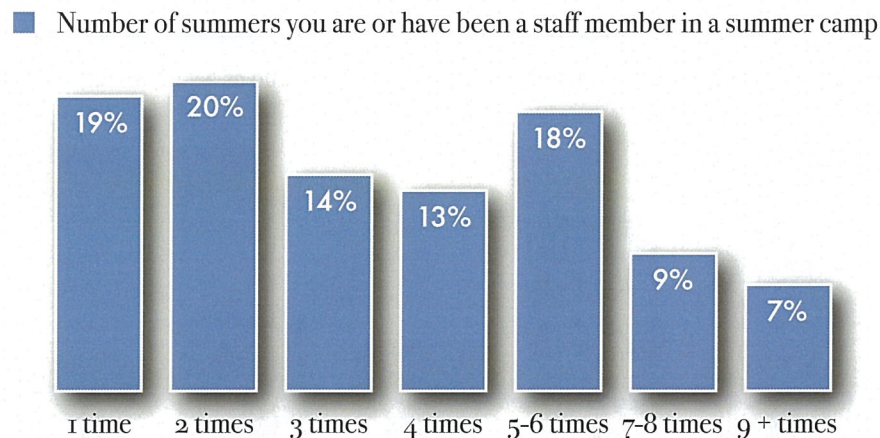
Over 80% of the current camp staff and alumni camp repeat their service to the church by repetitive summers working for the summer camp. It seems obvious that the camp staff experience is beneficial for those who participate due to the opportunity to repeat their service and mission in subsequent summer assignments.

Age of Participants. We asked everyone who did the Staff Survey how old they were. The age break-down showed that 18% of the participants were between 16 and 19 years of age. The largest age group to answer the survey questions were between the ages of 20 to 25 years of age, some 47%. While, on the other hand,

most of the alumni group surveyed were between 31 to over 51 years of age (36%) the complete age break-out is below.

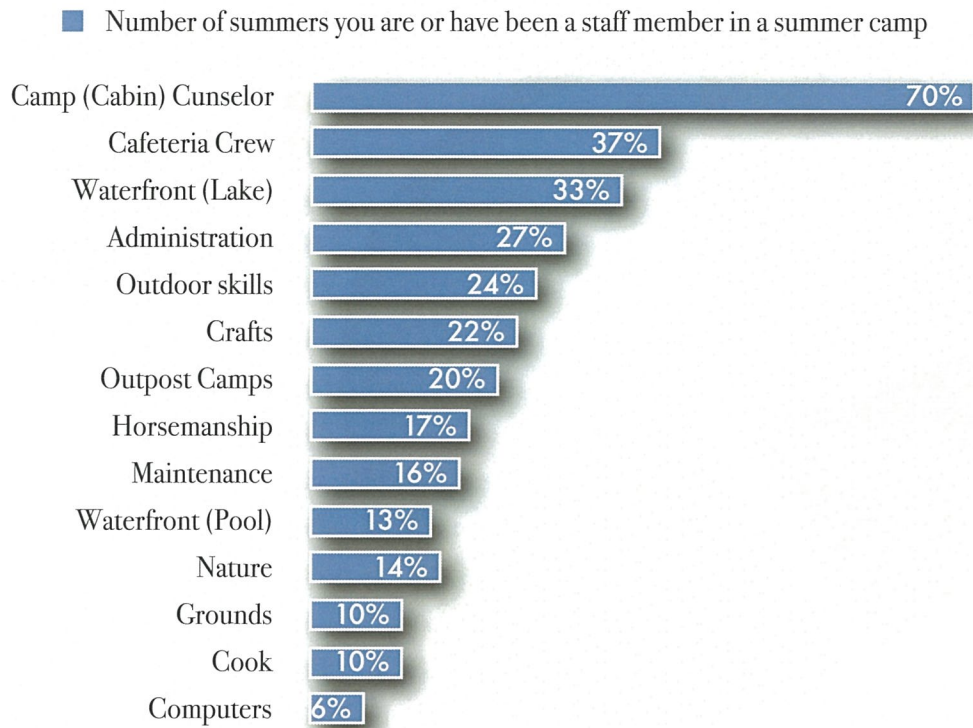


Summer Camp Participation - by Summers. It is also apparent that summer camp staff personnel often spend more than one term at camp. One might surmise that people just don't do things they don't like; therefore, the level of enjoyment seems high for those that participate in camp staff positions.



- I. *Camp Staff Positions.* We were interested in the types of positions that staff persons held and which, if any, seemed to take up most of the staff members' time. In addition we asked in what area did they spend most of their time while working at summer camp. The responses were varied; however, camp counseling, or cabin counselor was the most commonly held position by staff members at 70%. The next most populated responsibility was that of cafeteria crew with 37% and waterfront (lake or pool) stood at 33%. More than a fourth of the time camp staff felt that they were involved in some sort of administrative responsibilities (27%). Below is the complete description of staff responsibilities. Some of the summer camp staff positions include areas not mentioned in the list below such as: teaching wake kiting, camp nurse, mountain biking, ceramics, ski team, photography, gymnastics instructor, sailing instructor, canoeing instructor, video editing, wall climbing, model rocketry,

guitar teacher, challenge course instructor, drama class teacher, baking teacher, and Indian camp chief.

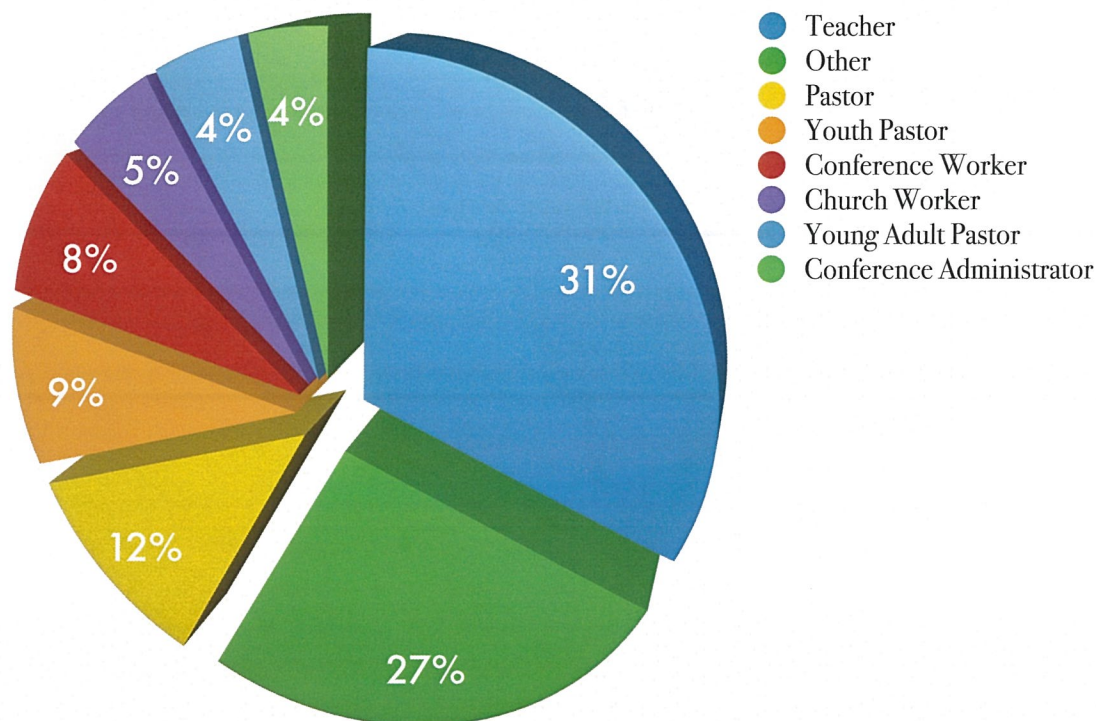


Schooling. Another demographic insight has to do with the educational experience of staff members. A significant majority (86%) of staff members have attended an Adventist high school, while a minority (14%) have never attended Adventist education in high school. When asked if they attend or had ever attended an Adventist college or university, the majority (87%) said “Yes” with only a minority again who did not. (12%). Looking at the highest degree earned by our participants showed 40% carried only a high school diploma, 9% a two -year college degree (AA, etc.), 34% obtained a four-year college or university degree, while 14% had graduate degrees (M.A., Ph.D., etc.), with 4% earning a professional graduate degree such as an M.D., J.D., Ed.D., or D.Min degree, etc.

Alumni Staff Professions. One of the key purposes of this research is to see the impact of summer camp staff involvement in future choices as they relate to the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Here we made some assumptions. (1) that work within an Adventist summer camp would have a significant impact on the future and actual life choices for employment. In one of the later sections of the survey we asked in what capacity do you see yourself employed or are you currently employed by the church? We asked them to check the one answer that best applies to you. We gave them opportunity to fill in a blank if one of the categories we suggested did not seem to apply. And while only

“I am training to become a teacher. I knew I wanted to work with kids forever after being a summer camp counselor.”

48% of our survey group could answer this question, the answers provide an interesting talking point as to the types of professions summer camp staff seems to suggest and in fact actually builds confidence in becoming an employee in the Adventist church system.



Spiritual Development

One major section of this survey targeted the role that the camp staff experience has on one's spiritual growth. Here we want to distinguish between religious growth - commitment and loyalty to a denomination, - the more vertical their God. We had heard power of this experience as spiritual growth. We goals of any ministry is to whom we minister a *vibrant*, and the value of spiritual life experience one has with testimonials about the it relates to personal believe that one of the chief nurture in the people to *life-transforming faith*, which is characterized by both a *deep personal relationship* with a loving God, and a *consistent commitment to serving others*. In this section we are concerned about spiritual development that can be equated with *Positive Youth Development* – which is a more secular term – but the outcomes (positive results) are filled with what we call values, and we believe that all values have a spiritual nature. After all, God – the greatest good – very well may be the source of all things of any value at all.

What was the best thing about camp? The deep, spiritual, lasting relationships that developed during my years working at camp!

To what degree has the camp staff experience helped to grow a spiritual life in these staff members? This was the focus of a number of questions targeted at getting at the core of this issue. We wanted to know both if camp had helped in this growth (before and after) as well as how important it was at all to the camp staff's personal religious growth. Here is a summary of the findings. Here we compare their general response with how important it is to them.

Question	Agree, Strongly agree	Somewhat, Extremely important
Was summer camp staff involvement a spiritual experience for you?	88%	72%
It helped me grow closer to Jesus	85%	79%
Was your summer camp staff experience central to your commitment to Jesus?	53%	69%

In addition, we wanted to know how the summer staff experience impacted spiritual growth. We posed a series of questions that asked staff members to reflect on their summer camp experiences and decide whether their spiritual (vertical relationship with God) was enhanced by the summer camp experience itself. For example, we shared the statement, "I had a close relationship with God BEFORE working at camp," and the contrasting statement, "I have a closer relationship with God AFTER working at camp." We discovered the following:

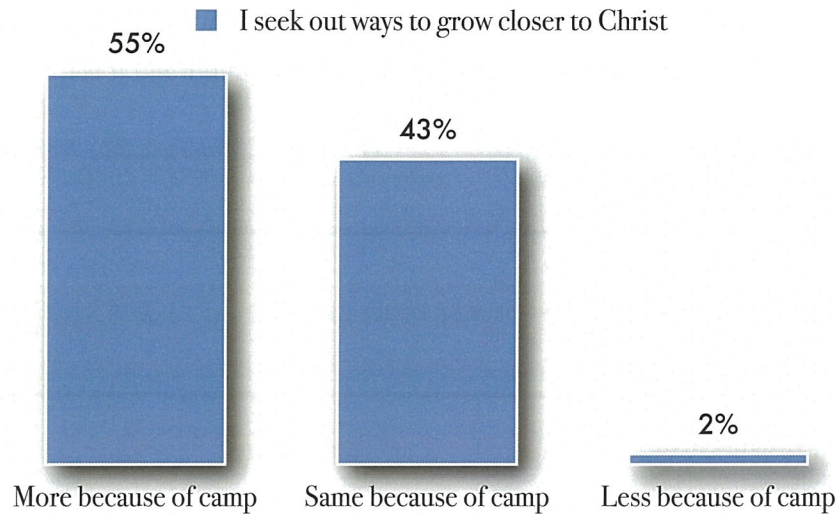
"I saw the church mission in action and I was a part of it."

"Somewhat & Definitely" (3 and 4 on a 5 point scale)	Before Camp	After Camp
Did you have a close relationship with God before camp and a closer relationship after camp?	83%	88%
How active were you in your local church before your camp staff experience and how active are you now or you think you will be after your summer camp staff experience?	74%	80%

In every instance on these questions, the camp experience proved a positive factor as relates to spiritual growth.

Another series of questions attempted to see the degree of growth due to the camp staff experience. We asked if because of their camp staff involvement they now seek out ways to grow closer to Christ. The

response format provide three options. (1) More because of the camp experience; (2) The same because of their experience at summer camp; and (3) Less because of it. The camp experience always enhanced closeness to Christ. Here are the results:



One of the questions on the survey was personal in nature. We asked whether or not their religious experience was more personal because of their camp staff exposure. An overwhelming response of 84% agreed with this statement while only 16% disagreed. We asked the question in reverse as well and wondered if the camp staff experience had had a negative impact on their life in a more general sense. 96% disagreed with this statement.



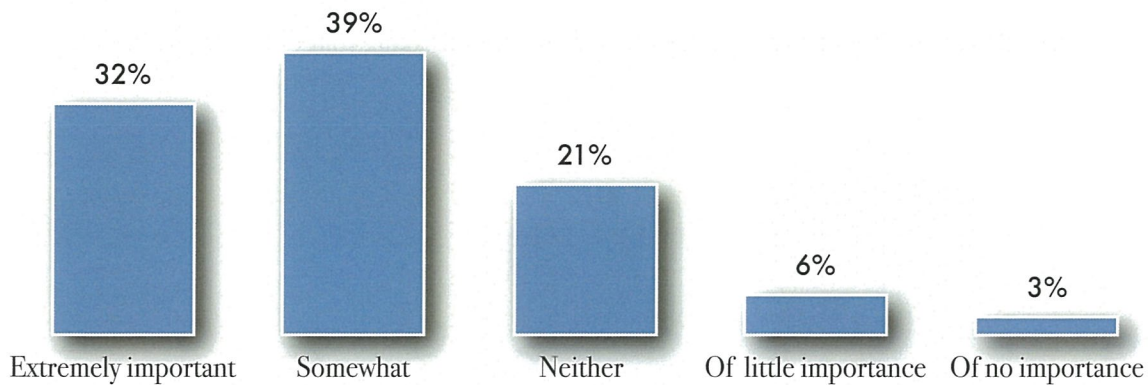
Loyalty and involvement in the Adventist church

One of the important research findings relates to the role of staff personnel growing closer to their church during their time as an active staff member. Loyalty to a denomination is often closely related to church

"It is an experience you'll never forget and it will grow you professionally and spiritually."

attendance patterns as well as personal piety issues such as the amount of time one spends in devotional life, prayer, meditation, reading one's Bible and becoming involved in others' lives in a helping capacity. While our survey did not ask the staff about their personal vertical responses to God as did our *Valuegenesis* research study, we did have the opportunity to explore one's commitment to the Adventist church.

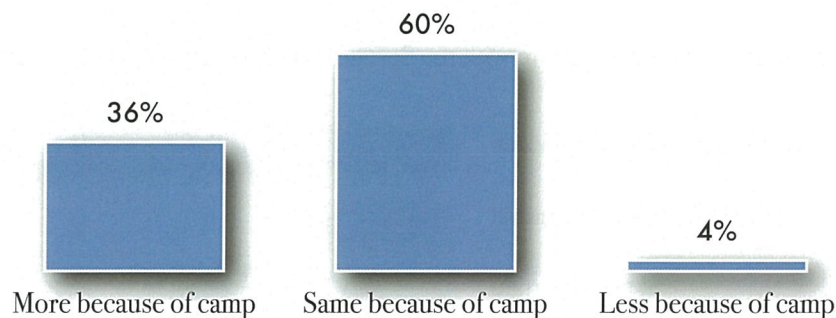
Personal Commitment. When asked if the staff experience helped personal commitment to Adventism, 64% "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with that statement while only 14% "disagreed." In comparing the importance of this issue for the staff members, 71% saw this issue as "extremely" or "somewhat" important.



When asked if the camp staff experience was helpful in changing your feeling about the church, 58% said that was true, while 42% disagreed with this statement; slightly more than half saw their camp staff experience as positive in this regard.

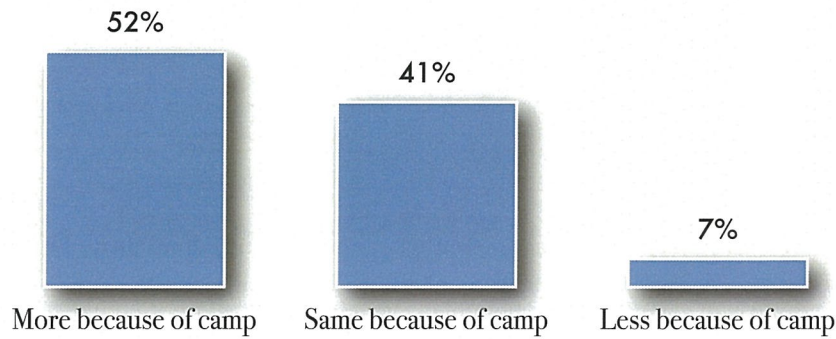
Local Church Involvement. Involvement in the local church only increased by 10% when asked if they were now active in their local church because of their summer camp staff experience. . This may be due to the fact that many, if not most of those who chose camp staff positions, were already active in the church. Nevertheless, the staff opportunities and skills seemed to help some in their perception of what they might do in their local church. However, it is obvious that there is only slight negative impact on involvement in the local church due to staff experience. When asked in a more general way if their camp staff experience would have a positive impact on their involvement in the local congregation, there was significant positive prediction by staff members

■ I think I will get more involved in my local church because of my camp staff experience.



Staff Experience and Career Choice. Another aspect of loyalty to the church has to do with the impact of working for the church at summer camp and one's choice of career within the Adventist workforce. We have already seen that many of those that have experienced the summer camp staff experience plan or actually are workers in the church. First, looking only at those who are currently employed in the Adventist church (approximately 50% of the total survey group), we asked if their camp staff experience was important in making their career decision. Here are their responses to this question.

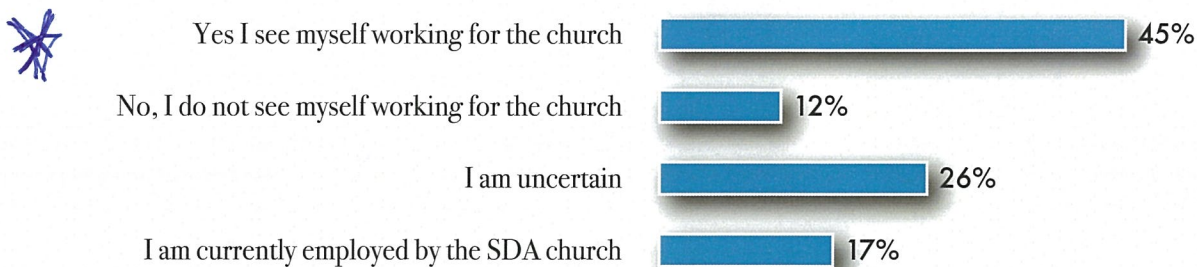
■ Do you think your staff experience was important in making your career decision?



We then asked about the reasons that the camp experience helped them to make this decision. Only one-third of the respondents opted to answer this question, but their clarifications are significant in providing specific reasons for this life choice as it relates to their camp experience. Appendix A provides a summary of the answers provided to our survey. They fall into five categories: (1) Personal spiritual reasons, (2) Identification of personal skills and talents (strengths and weaknesses), (3) Learned mission and passion, (4) Mentoring and modeling (Networking), (5) Staff experience had no effect on career choice.

Another interesting and helpful insight by way of our survey is a question we posed to the staff members that asked them to think about their future and answer this question: “Do you see yourself working for or with the Seventh-day Adventist church in the future?” By selective choice we eliminated all those who are currently employed by the church in this answer. Only 17% elected not to answer this question. Here are the responses to this query.

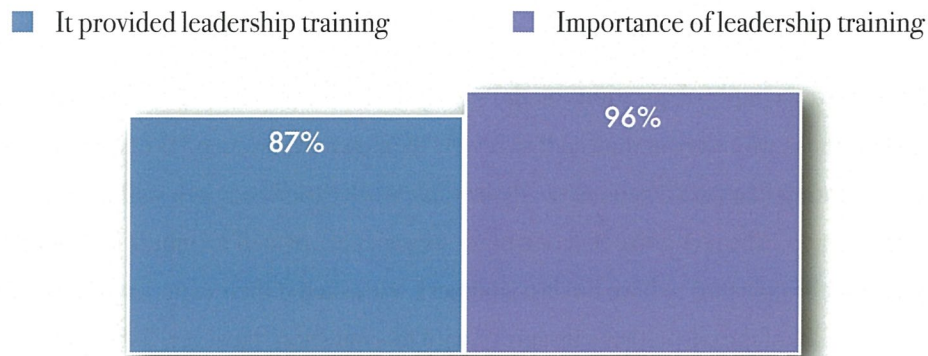
■ Do you see yourself working for or with the Seventh-day Adventist church in the future?



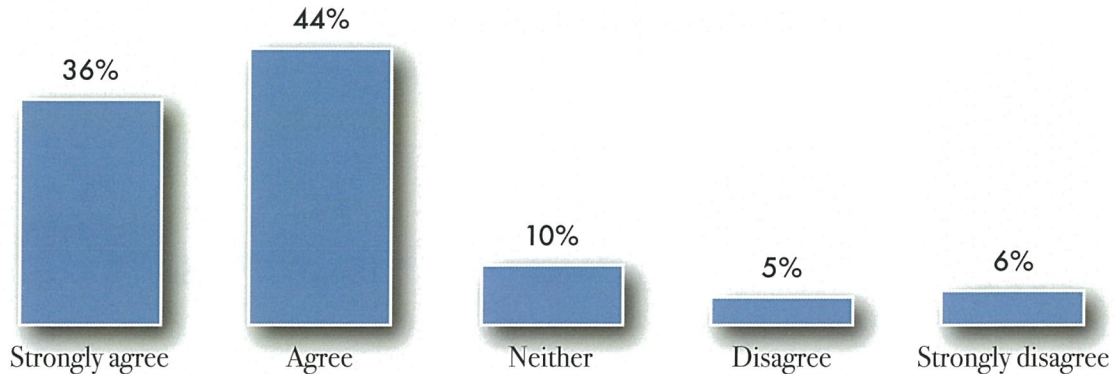
Skills Development

In identifying some of the areas of camp outcomes, the development and nurture of talents and skills was an important insight for understanding the purpose of Seventh-day Adventist camping experience. A

number of skills and experiences were identified in preliminary research.² In the camper survey these skill sets were explored. Only a few of these issues appeared on the staff survey. When asked if the staff experience provided leadership skills development 52% strongly agreed and another 34% agreed, while only 9% disagreed with the opportunity for leadership training found as a staff person at camp. 60% of the staff respondents said that this was an extremely important skill to develop. If you add the percentage of staff personnel that felt this skill was “somewhat” and “extremely” important, an overwhelming majority (96%) see this as an important skill to learn.

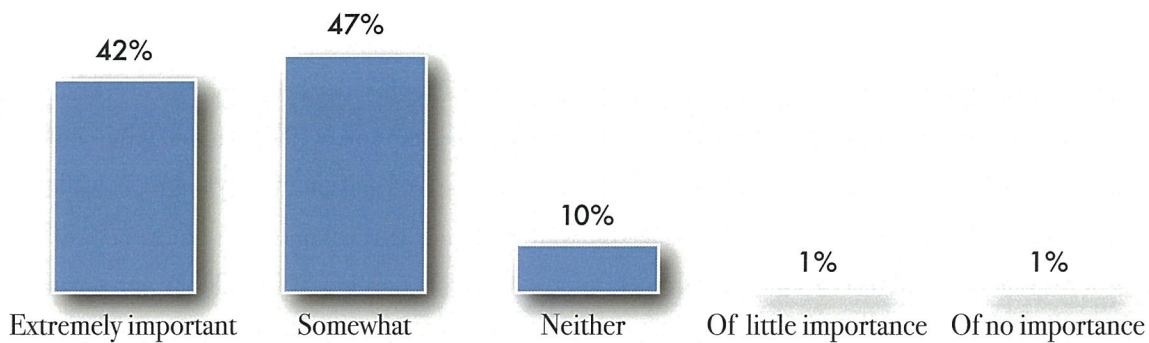


New skill training again was an important outcome for Adventist summer camps. We asked if camp staff had “learned new skills that they didn’t know they had.” In looking at their answers, 80% “strongly” or “agreed” that they had. Here are the findings for this question below:



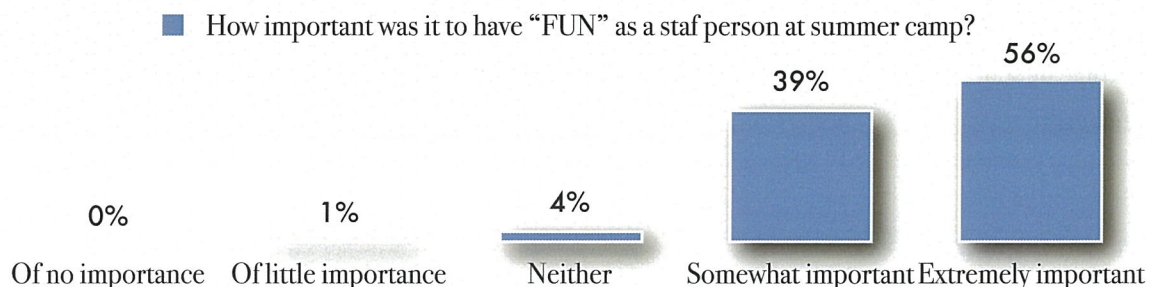
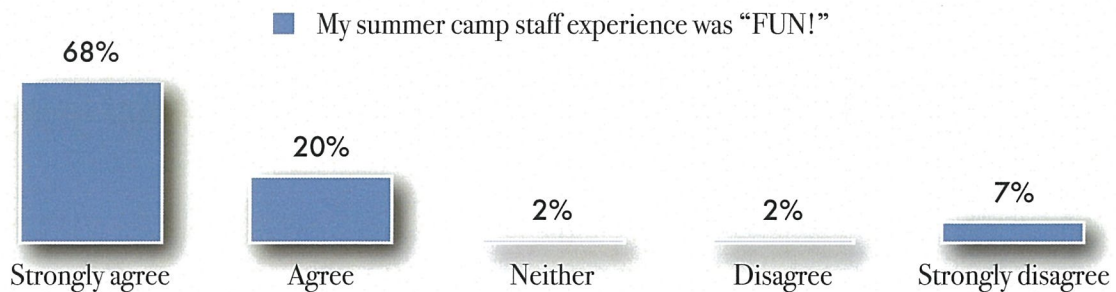
In addition, when asking the same question about learning new skills, we asked the importance of this outcome by staff members. It seems significantly important that this is a personal outcome for staff members.

² Early research directed at all of the camp directors, camp rangers, and administrative staff identified a number of outcomes that were seen as significant to the mission of Adventist camping. In a ranking of importance the following categories of camp outcomes was developed. On a four-point scale the percentages of 4 on a 4 point scale the rankings were as follows: (1) Religious and spiritual items included meeting Jesus (85%), making decision about baptism (74%), learning Bible truths (67%); (2) Self-Awareness items included making friends (67%), learning to work as a team (67%), learning independence (67%), making friends and learning to get along with others (67%), becoming responsible (40%), becoming better disciplined (40%), building curiosity (43%); (3) Environmental Awareness items included interest in exploration (75%), environmental awareness (60%), learning about nature, (33%). From these categories the final scales were derived for the camper survey itself.



Overall Staff Experience Rating

Fun Score. There were a couple of questions on the survey that allowed the camp staff to rate their summer experience and for those who were alumni staff to review their own experience. We were looking for an overall experience rating that would summarize their whole work experience as a staff member at an Adventist summer camp. We recognize that one of the experiences of staff members is to have an enjoyable time. More simply put, to have fun last summer! We asked if their experience as a staff member was simply “Fun.” 10% of the participants disagreed with this question, however, 88% experienced a “Fun” time as a staff member. And in addition, we asked just how important that experience was to their overall summer experience. As you can see, 95% of the staff personnel believed it was “somewhat” or “extremely important to have fun as a staff person.



Staff Satisfaction Ranking. In addition, we wanted them to rank on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 = absolutely the worst and where 10 = the best time ever, how much did you enjoy your camp staff experience. This questions gives opportunity to rank their whole experience on a satisfaction scale. The mean score was

exceptionally high. Staff members ranked their experience a “9” out of a possible “10.” No score below a 5 was more than 1% of the total responses. A very positive outcome for staff at summer camp!



Considerations for Conversation

It is important to recognize that research of this type can be helpful in a number of ways. While we have a significant number of respondents in both the current staff of 2008 and alumni staff members, it is interesting to see the congruence of attitudes and insights that both groups saw in their camp staff experience. There was little difference in the conclusions that either groups drew from their time at camp whether it be present recollection or past remembrances. Both groups saw their work as positive in both their spiritual development and their career choice. Both groups grew close to the church as an institution due to their time at summer camp and both groups saw the personal advantages of spending time in the camping ministry of the Adventist church. Here are some general conclusions that may be helpful to camp directors and staff training.

1. *Camp leadership training.* Insight into the major areas of responsibility of staff personnel can assist camps in planning their staff orientations to cover the types of duties that most likely will occupy the time of the staff member. More time should probably be spent in staff training as to how to be a significant mentor to campers since most of their time is spent with this responsibility.
2. *Summer camp staff positions influence career choice.* there is no questions that working as a staff member at a summer camp impacts positively a number of areas that assist the individual make decisions about their life work. In areas of leadership skills, gift discovery, personal ministry and witnessing, the camp staff experience provides both understanding of the mission of the church, but actively motivates young people to become active at both the local church and institutional levels.
3. *Positive summer experience.* The majority of staff and alumni staff people suggest that their camp staff involvement was a very positive experience. Areas of spiritual growth include closer prayer life, deeper understanding of God, a real sense of God’s presence, insight into their relationship with the Godhead, personal religious commitment, evangelistic interest, personal growth. In all these areas positive insights were provided in both statistical form and personal testimony. Most *negative experiences* related to staff conditions, staff responsibility, busy schedules, lack of clear staff training, building team spirit, consistency in staff relationships, pay difficulties.
4. *More non-SDA schooled staff are needed.* Since most staff members are most often involved in Adventist education, there is a vast majority of potential staff personnel available in the public school sector. This is an area of concern for our research team, who believes that all too often a majority of our time is spent ministering to only a minority of our constituency.

5. *Positive open-ended answers abound.* The survey delivered an abundance of information that is both interesting and very helpful. Time should be spent with these responses in Appendix A - E to understand the mind-set of the staff and alumni staff in regards to their summer staff experiences. In reading these responses, one understands the profound impact summer camps have had on both the life choices and personal spiritual growth of each participant. In the following pages, you will find summaries of each of the open-ended questions on the survey. In each case almost 50% to 65% of the staff personnel responded. This information shows the power and enduring impact of staff positions at summer camps among our study group of current staff and alumni staff members. Just how to best use these responses is a crucial discussion to have among directors of camp programs in the Adventist church. Here is an example of an anecdote that typify the kinds of responses we received that need retelling.

"Camp is the hardest job you will ever love."

"It really is where God spends His summers."

- *I was a counselor for many summers. I had each camper fill out a 3x5 card with their name, address, hobbies and 3 things they liked best about camp. After camp was over, I would write a brief letter to each camper. I loved each camper. Now when I visit camp, I have these adults come up to me who are bringing their kids to camp and say, "Hey, you were my camp counselor. I really appreciated you. Now I'm bringing my kids to camp so they can experience the positive things I did." One life changing time happened during junior camp. The parents of a little girl in my cabin were driving home from dropping their daughter at camp. A Yield sign was run and the mother was killed. Her dad came the next afternoon to tell her what happened. I still remember feeling helpless about what to do for worship. I just prayed in my heart and sat the girls on the bottom bunks and the little girl was the first to speak, "Can we read the 23rd Psalm tonight? My mom would read that to me every night." We read it, and then she said, "You know, I think Jesus prepared me for this time. An angel sent me a dream about 3 nights ago that something really, really bad happened to my mom. I think I won't be so sad now. I know I'll see her again." Of course, we were all crying and we all prayed and recommitted our lives to Jesus. I still praise God that I had the opportunity to work at camp so I could BE THERE for kids when they were going through difficult times, whether death or questionings or family troubles. To share Jesus' love brings the most joy ever.*
- *At no time in my life was I ever so sure that I was doing God's will than during the summers that I was at camp. I remember a child who I wanted so badly to send home. He caused all sorts of problems. He even tried to shoot me with the archery equipment. We decided to give him one more day. That was Thursday. On Friday he was very intently watching the Friday night play. After the play he asked me if I was going to Heaven. I told him yes. He asked me if he had to be good to get to Heaven. I told him that he needed to love Jesus and that if he did, Jesus would make him want to be good. He asked me if the Tree of Life would have a mossy side the way trees in the woods do. I told him I didn't know, but it might. He asked me what I wanted to do when I got to Heaven. I told him that I wanted first and foremost to meet Jesus face to face. After that I wanted to talk to my angel. Then I wanted to reunite with family and friends. Just as we were settling into our tipi for the night he asked me one more question. He said he wanted to love Jesus, and that if he were good enough to make it to Heaven, would I meet him on the mossy side of the Tree of Life after I was done with all the other stuff I wanted to do. I answered as I held back tears, "You better believe I'll be there. In fact, I'll meet you first and we will go meet Jesus together." Ever since then, whenever I part ways with someone I tell them that story and say, "I'll see you on the mossy side."*

APPENDIX A

Survey Questions, Table Label, and Questions Wording

Question #	Table label	Wording of Questions
1.1	Camp affiliation	What is the name of your camp? (Where did you do our staff assignment?)
2.2	Staff position	Are you alumni camp staff or 2008 camp staff?
3.3	Staff longevity	How many times (summers or parts of summers) have you worked as a staff member at a summer camp?
4.4	Spiritual growth	Was your summer camp experience a "spiritual" experience? (Both personal and devotional?)
5	Spiritual growth importance	How important was your camp experience for spiritual growth?
6.5	Social experience	Was your summer camp staff experience "fun"?
7	Social experience importance	How important was it to have "fun" as staff?
8.6	Leadership training	Did camp staff experience provide leadership training?
9	Leadership importance	How important was it that your experience provided leadership training?
10.7	Commitment to Adventism	Did camp staff experience help your commitment to Adventism?
11	Commitment importance	How important was it to have the camp experience help that commitment?
12.8	Personal piety	Did camp staff experience help you grow closer to Jesus?
13	Personal piety importance	How important was it to have the camp experience grow you closer to Jesus?
14.9	Skills development	Camp experience helped me learn new skills I didn't know I had.
15	Skills importance	How important was it to learn new skills?
16.10	Attitudes towards church	Was this or previous camp experience helpful in changing your feelings about the church?
17	Church attitude importance	How important was the camp experience helpful in changing your feelings about the church?
18.11	Personal piety 2	Was summer camp staff experience central to your commitment to Jesus?
19	Personal piety 2 importance	How important was your camp experience in making your commitment to Jesus?
20.12	Evangelism	How important was it as a staff member to help lead someone to Jesus?
21.13	Church involvement - BEFORE	How active were you in your local church BEFORE your summer camp staff experience?
22.14	Church involvement - AFTER	How active are you now or you think you will be AFTER your summer camp staff experience?
23.15	Personal Piety 3 - BEFORE	I had a close relationship with God BEFORE working at camp.

Question #	Table label	Wording of Questions
24.16	Personal Piety 4 - AFTER	I have a close relationship with God AFTER working at camp.
25.17	Camp & spiritual growth	I seek out ways to grow closer to Christ (More or Less because of camp staff experience)
26.18	Church involvement 2	I think I will get more involved in my local church (More or Less because of camp staff experience)
27.19	Church involvement 3	I am active in my local church because of my summer camp staff experience. (More or Less because of camp staff experience)
28.20	Personal piety 5	Religious experience more personal because of my camp staff involvement?
29.21	Impact (Negative)	The camp experience had a negative impact in my life.
30.22	SDA employee importance	As an employee of the SDA church, do you think your staff experience was important in making your career decision?
31.23	SDA employee decisions	As an employee of the SDA church, how did camp staff experience help you to make this career decision?
32.24	Decision making	Write a brief experience you remember that would help someone make a decision to become a camp staff member.
33.25	Summer camp - Best thing	Tell us what was the very best thing about your staff experience.
34.26	Demographic - Age	What is your current age?
35.27	Demographic - Camp involvement	How many summers you are or have been a staff member in a summer camp
36.28	SDA schools involvement	Did you attend an Adventist school between the 1st to the 8th grades? If yes, how many years?
37.30	SDA school attendance	Did you or do you attend an Adventist high school? if "yes," then how many years?
38.31	Academic degree(s)	What is your highest earned degree in school?
39.32	Academic achievement	Did you attend an Adventist college or university? If "yes," then how many years?
40.33	Staff positions	Check all that apply - (List of 13 choices)
41.34	Staff positions - actual employment	Where did you spend most of your time?
42-44.36-37	Staff recommendations	Would you recommend the camp staff position to your friends or children as a significant summer job? If "yes," why", if "probably not," explain."
45.38	Value opinion	Write a few words about the value of working as a staff member at summer camp
46.39	Camp changes	If you could change anything at camp, what would you change to make your staff experience better and more positive?

Question #	Table label	Wording of Questions
47.40	SDA loyalty	Do you see yourself working for the SDA church in the future or are you currently a worker in the church?
48.41	SDA employment	In what capacity do you see yourself employed or are currently employed by the church?
49.42	Satisfaction scale	On a scale of 1-10 how much did you enjoy your camp staff experience?

APPENDIX B

Staff Relationship to Career Choice (Reasons)*



Spiritual Blessing

- The kids made the difference.
- It made me think about more important things in life a little bit rather than just what I want, what I think is best for me. It made me think of others.
- It led me to realize that what I truly want and need is a life of service.
- It cleared my head from everything else; my experience gave me more insight on the Sabbath.
- Pertaining to my decision of career, being employed by the SDA church has done little to necessarily guide me towards any specific career goals other than this: being employed and involved within the SDA church for so long and so much has helped me to contrast it to the true, deep experiences that God wants.
- It wasn't until I was given a position of responsibility in working with youth that I took seriously the idea of how much influence I could have. Working at camp has helped me develop skills that will be invaluable in continuing on the kind of care for youth that I've been a part of at camp.
- I decided to work at camp after attending camp as a camper.
- It made it clear that the educational field was right for me.
- It helped me confirm that work involving service for God and others, work that actively involves reaching out to those around me, was the kind of work I wanted to do.
- Encouraged me that working in a church environment is positive, kept me aimed at working in the church, something I still do today as an SDA minister.
- Having worked in healthy and clean environment through our church I realized what a great team the SDA family can be. It is a real privilege. I had the desire to continue working for the church.
- Found I enjoyed working with kids.
- I saw the church mission in action and I was a part of it.
- By being able to work with the kids focused my career choice.
- I think that although I could have made more of the opportunity I had this summer, it did help me to streamline my priorities. Somehow, when you're growing up, reality has so many shades that it can be difficult to strain out the wheat from the tares as far as what is truth and what is of importance. My camp pastor said during a staff meeting really struck me: "We hope that you will have a ministry focus for your life." Although that concept seems obvious, I hadn't been fully aware of the presence in me to desire that. It was more awakened when it was spoken, and I still hear echoes of it from time to time. The word "ministry" has so many connotations in our society, yet the picture that comes to mind when I think of it is of someone stooping down and outstretching a hand, to place a cool hand on the forehead of a fevered and chaotic world. I think that the most important focus we can have in this life is not on any doctrine, but on this idea of selflessness. Only by seeing the unthinkable extremes of selflessness that defines God's character ("The image of God in the face of Jesus Christ") can we ever grow out of our innate self-obsession and learn the meaning of love, the meaning of purity, of beauty, of joy. "The absence of God is an illusion" because where true Love exists, it must have a Source. Going to a public college makes me truly startled at the implication of the dominant belief system in our world. If life, intelligence, merely sprung from the ground through materialistic processes, if everything is about survival of the fittest, than how have human beings through time been willing to desert themselves, desert the drive for survival, and give? Life is ugly without God. No one seeks God, not one. Sometimes not me. But I can feel the tremendous difference when I do. I don't know what I want to do with my life for a career, but I know that after

college, I will join the peace corps, and hopefully during that time, have a clearer perspective on what is important and what I want to fill my time with. I also want to write books and create music that points people to God. I think that camp this summer didn't impact who I am as much as attending the same camp when I was young. The seed of faith was really planted deeply at the right time. I used to always watch the videos when I needed inspiration, and even the impression of beauty and grace in the nature surrounding camp, the songs still imprinted on my soul, the people and their strength of faith... I have no doubt that camps are really a prime location for turning hearts in the right direction.



Learned Strengths and Weaknesses

- I grew through the devotions the camp staff had and by allowing us to take part of the worship program.
- I realized that impacting people's lives for Christ is the most important thing in life.
- It confirmed the passions I already knew existed in my life.
- It gave me experiences that lead me to become a teacher.
- I had already made my decision, but it helped make it concrete.
- I know now that serving others is what makes me happy. If I am serving others, I am serving God.
- It was at camp I realized that I could do ministry with my peer group. Camp also gave me the confidence to do so.
- I can see that though we aren't perfect, we do a lot of good.
- I learned leadership skills at camp along with making connections and developing relationships with conference administrators. When I graduated from college - they offered me a job because they were aware of and knew the skills I could offer them. The administrators I worked for at camp were also the administrators I currently work for. I have a great respect for them and was excited to continue working with them.
- Camp provided opportunities to see my gifts in action, and to understand how God works on a daily basis in my life.
- I wanted to make a difference in our church! Working at camp showed me it is possible.
- It showed me an important aspect of ministry - and that our church values a variety of ministry opportunities.
- I worked in the field that I wish to enter into.
- Helped to show me my love of teaching and working with kids.
- By working with children at camp, I made the decision to become a teacher.
- It didn't affect my career choice, but it certainly made me want to share Jesus with more people.
- I became a teacher. I discovered at camp that I had a burden in my heart for ministering to children. Also, the influence of camp friends helped to inspire me to go back to school.
- Gave me a focus as to what career I would go.
- I know I want to work with kids.
- Working with the campers helped me realize that I wanted to be a teacher and that money shouldn't be the only thing that keeps me from what I'm being called to do.
- I saw the need that people had, the need to share Jesus with everyone. And that's a main reason why I'm interested in Theology
- Without camp, I wouldn't see the importance in reaching out to kids and making God's kingdom even bigger.



Learned Options and Passions

- I am now employed full time at a camp, obviously it had a major influence in my career choice.
- It reinforced the idea that I like working with people.
- I have not yet decided on a career, working at Camp opened up a whole world of opportunities however.
- I started out as a young staff member and now I am full time camp staff.
- Showed me how much I like working with kids .
- Well, my career choice is undecided, but working at camp helped me see what I might want to be.
- Helped to develop my skill sets for ministry; gave me confidence that I could do ministry effectively;
- It helped me to see my talents!
- I was disappointed with some of the pastors who would come and speak to the kids. That got me thinking about how I would do things differently and how I would improve those talks. This led me to think about being a pastor and now I know that is what God is calling me to just that.
- To see so many young people in love with the Lord you want to stand even taller in your faith.
- I am training to become a teacher. I knew I wanted to work with kids forever after being a summer camp counselor.
- Learning to work with children has focus my career goals.
- Didn't impact all that much on decision...I ended up becoming an SDA pastor; kind of informed me on much of what it might be like.
- Because of some of the work that I did at camp it helped me realize what I enjoyed doing and steered me toward a career.
- My leadership skills excelled, as well as my self-confidence in my physical and mental capability. This has lead me to lead a career primarily in management duties.
- It is what helped me decide to become a teacher. I found out how much I enjoyed working with kids.
- Well, as rough as it may sound... I realized that I didn't want to become a teacher. I really loved the camp experience but I realized that I don't have the patience to work with students for the rest of my life.
- It made me realize that I would like to work in a SDA setting or even work for the church.
- It helped me see that working with children was something I was called to.
- The leadership opportunities I was given helped me realize I could lead through teaching, so I became a teacher.
- I am a teacher and it has helped cultivate my passion for children.
- I have not yet completely decided on a certain career path - still in the process. Summer Camp did enforce the liking that I have for the outdoors and working with kids.
- Through the help of my supervisor(s) and fellow staff members, I was able to see my strengths develop as I was occasionally pushed out of my comfort zone, as well as see my weaknesses. It definitely helped me direct my long-term goals as to where I can go career wise.
- It helped me learn more about myself and about what avenues I might be interested in pursuing.
- Discovered the enjoyment of working with people and the reward of focusing on something outside yourself.
- I currently work at summer camp - all year long! My positive camp experience obviously had an impact on my current job choice
- I became aware of how much I loved working with children/youth and the need to minister to them.
- A Task Force position came open and I needed a change in a positive direction, looking back it is the first time I can remember the Lord truly leading the direction of my life.

- I realized there were organizations in the church more concerned about people than church politics.
- It helped me really see how Important the Youth are and how it is so important at a young age to experience Christ. Camp is an opportunity for SDA and non-SDA young people to be immersed in an environment that is Christ centered and with good role models of practical Christianity.
- It let me know how much of a leader I am, and how much I love kids.
- I became a teacher in an SDA school and now I am an administrator.
- I learned the joy of working with others for a greater good.
- It completely turned my life around and because of my camp experience God led me into ministry.
- It kept me connected with church leadership and opened doors.
- It cemented my desire to work for the church.
- My talents were revealed to me I enjoy working with children and becoming a teacher, I knew I would appreciate the experience working with children at camp.
- I loved working at camp! I can't say, however, that camp had anything to do with my church employment. I needed a job and this one was available.
- I'm doing something where I can have fun and have an impact
- I wanted to be a pastor and working at camp showed me the importance of reaching out to people especially youth.
- I want to help others. Both camp and nursing are a great avenue for this.
- I realized that the only need for me to do was to help people.
- I learned a lot about myself during my time at camp, which helped me strengthen my weaknesses and in turn has given me confidence and reassurance in my decision to become a teacher. Working as a camp staff has given me the desire to witness as a student missionary.
- It made me realize that I love working with kids and teaching them new skills.



Networking

- I was able to talk to people that were currently pursuing the field that I was interested in and was able to compare my likes and dislikes with them.
- I saw a lot of hypocrisy among staff members; people in cliques and such. Going off camp on days off and drinking alcohol, etc, that really turned me off to the SDA church. That and the whole Ellen White thing was a big turnoff. I am no longer an Adventist, although I would say this is not due directly to working at
- It solidified my desire to find employment that serves others rather than employment that serves myself. My camp experience has allowed me to make this a central value of whatever job I seek.
- I was encouraged by Adventists to pursue a career in Adventist education.
- When the job opportunity came I was very excited about returning to camp because of the positive experience I had as a camper.
- It played a very small role in helping me make my career decision.
- My camp pastor said during a staff meeting really struck me: "We hope that you will have a ministry focus for your life." Although that concept seems obvious, I hadn't been fully aware of the presence in me to desire that. It was more awakened when it was spoken, and I still hear echoes of it from time to time. The word "ministry" has so many connotations in our society, yet the picture that comes to mind when I think of it is of someone stopping down and outstretching a hand, to place a cool hand on the forehead of a fevered and chaotic world. I think that the most important focus we can have in this life is not on any doctrine, but on this idea of selflessness. Only by seeing the unthinkable extremes of selflessness that defines God's character ("The image of God in the face of Jesus Christ") can we ever grow out of our innate self-obsession and learn the meaning of love, the meaning of purity, of beauty, of joy. "The absence of God is an illusion" because where true Love

exists, it must have a Source. Going to a public college makes me truly startled at the implication of the dominant belief system in our world. If life, intelligence, merely sprung from the ground through materialistic processes, if everything is about survival of the fittest, than how have human beings through time been willing to desert themselves, desert the drive for survival, and give? Life is ugly without God. No one seeks God, no one. Sometimes not me. But I can feel the tremendous difference when I do. I don't know what I want to do with my life for a career, but I know that after college, I will join the peace corps, and hopefully during that time, have a clearer perspective on what is important and what I want to fill my time with. I also want to write books and create music that points people to God. I think that camp this summer didn't impact who I am as much as attending the same camp when I was young. The seed of faith was really planted deeply at the right time. I used to always watch the videos when I needed inspiration, and even the impression of beauty and grace in the nature surrounding camp, the songs still imprinted on my soul, the people and their strength of faith... I have no doubt that camps are really a prime location for turning hearts in the right direction.



Of No Effect

- I'm not an SDA employee but it would be something I would consider in the future after becoming qualified.
- It really did not
- I had already made my decision.
- After several years, I found the leadership to be very hypocritical and eventually I was very happy to leave the church
- I have not really made my career decision.
- I already had a career outside of the camp experience.
- Working at camp is where I discovered that I had management skills; where I learned that I could get along with people, solve problems and provide direction.
- I am not an employee of the SDA church.
- It did not change my previous plans.
- Camp had nothing to do with the career I chose.
- It helped me realize my gift in working with children. Would have made this decision with or without the staff experience.
- It made me realize that I would like working with kids as my job.
- Helped me realize how much I enjoy working with kids and teaching them.
- It didn't. I was planning on being a Mechanical Engineer anyway.
- It didn't. It helped me realize my desire to work with kids on a full-time basis.
- Helped shape my desire for youth ministry. Helped me realize that I love working with children of all ages.
- Because I am now a teacher and camp helped solidify my love for kids and showing them Christ in everyday situations whether we can talk about Him or not.
- It helped me decide indeed that I wanted to be a teacher. It gave me experience with different age groups and helped in determining what group I wanted to work with.
- I attended camps several times as a kid. These experiences helped shaped my walk with Jesus and others.
- I felt a need to be with kids who didn't have such a great home life and try to help them get opportunities to change their life. To try to give them the tool to do so, camp just reinforced that choice to go into education.
- I always wanted to help people
- I have great memories of the people I worked with and wanted to feel the family feeling again.

- Time spent working with the children helped me realized I wanted a career that focused on working with kids.
- I spent 7 years working for my church as a full-time employee after my camp experience
- It showed me how to act on my toes and deal with situations as they arise in ways not expected.
- My job didn't have anything to do with what I would like to pursue as a career.

(This summary is a representative selection of the categories analyzed by way of content analysis. Duplications and similar statements have been eliminated from the list for economy.)*

APPENDIX C

Of What Value is Working at Summer Camp? (Reasons)*



Spiritual Growth

- You gain a friendship with Christ and your fellow staff and the campers that will last for a lifetime.
- Invaluable; the lives changed (campers and staff alike) for the kingdom are incalculable.
- You can only do it for a certain period of time in your life. As I stated previously, it's a great way to witness to others.
- You'll never be the same again. At a place like this, you just pray that you'll be able to somehow be more of a blessing, than you are receiving!
- I think you hit on it in the questions. It has helped me mature in the Lord and in my life. It has created many memories that I will always treasure. It has helped me develop confidence and leadership skills. It also has given me a chance to share the Lord in a powerful way that I could not have done on my own.
- It will deepen your relationship with God and give you confidence.
- As a staff member you are working on the front lines for Christ. The presence of God is so clearly there you can almost see it at times. You also get to work with a hand-picked group of other people who are there for the same reason, AND there are all sorts of fun things to do. YOU WORK HARD, but it is worth it. There are a lot of fun things that happen too, like dramas that get a bit silly at times, and staff events. And there are campers that come back year-to-year that know you and love you.
- You gain awesome experiences with your Creator and people who have the same values as you.
- It was at summer camp that I discovered my calling to be a teacher, I renewed my walk with God, and began relationships with people that to this day help maintain that walk.
- Helps create sense of God being able to use you.
- You are surrounded by quality Christians dedicated to the ministry of children. It's a great influence on your personal relationship with Christ.
- It is the best growing and spiritual experience you will have.
- Learn new things and grow in Christ.
- It keeps one thinking of others and focused on reflecting Jesus to others. The experience may be helpful in the future. It is wonderful to know that the Lord used you that summer.
- Your christian experience will be better overall after working in an atmosphere where everyone truly loves the lord.
- Its very important in shaping the kids relationship with Christ.
- It gives you a vision of what being part of a Christian Community is like. A little taste of heaven is really not too much of an exaggeration, God created us to be in close community with our fellow believers, and to work toward the salvation of others. Both of those things happen at camp.
- Serve the Lord and find out more about yourself in the role as a Christian and at the same time, doing something that you like to do.
- To learn, grow spiritually, to share your testimony and help others.

- Teaches you to act responsibly and maturely. It also shows you how to find God in almost any situation possible.
- You get to experience Jesus in Nature and show his light to kids.
- It helps you draw closer to God and to share God with others.
- The Spiritual environment, the family of staff and watching God work at camp gives it the high value it has in my eyes.
- You get to be part of a team working for God.
- The value is in the spiritual refreshment and the opportunity to share Christ and make connections.
- It is such a ministry to our kids. Most of our kids are friendship campers, and most know little, or none about Jesus and his love, and it is our job to share Him with them.
- Without seeing God, no one can try to emulate Him. Jesus is the "image of the invisible God" and camp serves to demonstrate His character. Just as you give "not a cup but a cow" to people in need of physical sustenance, camp helps people unexposed or only dimly aware of spiritual realities to feed the inner man, a skill they will need throughout life.
- I learnt so much about myself, and so much about what truly is important in life. God really spoke to me through nature, the programs and through the kids in my cabin. It was an incredible blessing, one which I am sad to have left behind in America.
- Working at camp will bring you closer to God and to others. It will make you a deeper, stronger person.
- Friendship and free to express and see children express their Love for God.
- Opens your eyes to the worlds that kids come from. Helps you learn how to share Jesus and to love difficult people.
- Your influence on kids! Showing Christ to others.
- Camp is one of many ministries that there are out there. Kids ministries, camp is the start of our future church members, church leaders. In order to get somewhere with our church, in order to make evangelism possible, and in order to make the second coming of Christ a sooner reality, camp is there for that.
- Its a great way to make great friends and to show kids what it means to be Christians.
- It is so extremely valuable to the kids that God sends to camp for you and you for them.
- Your influence on kids! Showing Christ to others.
- It makes you grow up and take some responsibility, it is amazing for your relationship with God.
- You are able to touch so many different children's lives. Just being at Camp working with everyone towards a common goal helps bring your personal relationship closer to God.
- The bond that is created with the staff and the praise for God that occurs literally, all the time.
- I gained confidence with my people skills, learned good leadership skills and most of all grew closer to God
- Working as a staff member brought me closer to Jesus
- Sets you up for serving others and a desire to lead others to Christ.
- Grow closer to God, meet great people, have an impact on kids' lives.
- The greatest value of working as a summer camp staff is being surrounded by other youth with a desire to serve God.
- As an instructor, you take on the role of a teacher for a few weeks and able to help kids be successful with activities they may have never done before. That carries satisfaction. Additionally if you can help a kid know Christ better, the effect can be unimaginable. Oh, and the friends that are made with other staff are like none other
- It helps ya get closer to God and having fun spreading the good news of Jesus.

- I learned a significant amount about myself. It allowed growth in communication, compassion, and spirituality.
- It provides a relatively safe and supportive atmosphere for growing as a Christian and being able to share one's faith with an important and diverse audience.
- Working at camp is beneficial to both camper and staff in relationships growing in Christ.
- You grow closer to God and closer to yourself.
- Kids' lives are positively affected for good. They are impressionable and God does make an impact that lasts.
- Gives first time employees a view of working in a job with many different people and positions. Also works at showing the love of God.
- Being a staff member is ministry. It gives you a taste of what God can do through you.
- It's a blessing.
- Summer camp allows you to be a part of others finding themselves personally and spiritually in a relaxed environment and usually it is at a time that no one is expecting it. Nature is the biggest argument against big bang theory thus able to help young people realize that they are here by plan not accident.
- I don't go to an adventist school, so I don't have friends I can have spiritual discussions with, so making friends with whom I can talk about such things was amazing.
- Your Christian walk and job experience capabilities will be strengthened with your time as a staff member.
- It is a good way to make friends with people that are like minded about God and spiritual issues. It also has helped me grow closer to God and made me more spiritual. Also, I have done things at camp that I never would have normally (driving boats, tractors, laying carpeting, working with kids, etc.)
- Working at Big Lake provides an amazing opportunity to grow as an individual, grow in Christ and grow in service.
- It gives you a chance to work with a team and share Jesus with kids and have a lot of fun.
- It helps you grow as a spiritual being, as well as learning to serve others. It helps young men and women mature in a healthy environment.
- It was a life-changing experience. It solidified my commitment to Jesus.
- It strengthens your relationship with God when you have to explain your relationship to others. And your character is strengthened because the campers are always watching.
- Not only can it help you strengthen your faith, you can help someone else strengthen theirs.
- Strengthens your faith and shows you that there are good youth around and also formed lifelong friendships.



Life Experiences and Lessons

- Provides wonderful people skills and ability to work with others in once-in-a-lifetime environment.
- It teaches us lifelong lessons about how to have fun worships and how to positively interact with kids.
- It is such a positive environment and character building. You are bringing people to the Lord.
- Close relationships are developed, and what you do makes a difference in people's lives.
- Working as a staff member at summer camp changes lives - yours and those around you.
- Working at camp teaches you how to work in a team effort, how to sacrifice self for a cause, and how to depend on God.
- You learn responsibility, hard work, accountability, how to be flexible and work with a

team

- It teaches you cooperative, speech, acting, hard work, instructing and other skills.
- You are responsible for your campers and they look up to you as a role model.
- Personal responsibility, development of leadership skills, a unique opportunity to
- In terms of my feelings toward the Adventist church, camp made all the difference - in a POSITIVE way. It showed me that we could LOVE without judgment.
- Working as summer camp staff gives an opportunity for a young person to serve selflessly for the joy of others.
- You learn how to deal with kids, in the best and worst of times. You develop close quarters social skills, and you have a support group to help you when you are struggling.
- You can change the world one camper at a time.
- A value that stood out to me was that, despite problems, misunderstandings, or even days that went beyond perfect, it was always looked at in the perspective of a bigger picture; it was always moving forward and we were learning and growing in the process. It has a great balance of using past experience to create new experience.
- Extremely valuable - especially over a long period. You grow and learn each year and become more and more effective for God.
- I learned skills and work ethic that have impacted me for the rest of my life.
- I can't place a value on the camp experience. It's indescribable!
- It teaches teamwork. So important in any relationship.
- Relationship with God, Family/Friends for life, I met my wife of 16 years at camp, and I am a much better parent and teacher because of my camp experience.
- You get to touch lives around you on a daily basis and learn how to relate to people from every walk of life.
- You have a like minded community, accountability, encouragement and a whole lot of fun all in the name of leading young people closer to Jesus. What isn't there to like?
- It has taught me my values, self-concept, direction, and helped me make connections (networking). I had a great time and stayed healthy.
- There is so much value in learning the leadership role. Sure you are just leading some kids, but you develop the ability to lead and expand that to other areas.
- Great experience. Could have been made a lot better by having the camp director involved in what we were doing instead of sitting on the sidelines.
- I learned responsibility.
- I learned leadership skills and how to be effective upfront.
- Life-long friendships, learning leadership skills, spreading the word of God, impacting the life of a child...
- It strengthens or hones leadership skills as well as teaching one how to be a good witness. It also creates an environment where trust in God is put to the test and never fails.
- You learn about yourself and working with other people and also what your strengths and weaknesses are. These are all things that will help as you choose a career. I also felt closer to God at camp. It was wonderful to be around people similar to myself and I made amazing friends.
- Relationships and outdoor skill development.
- Working at camp provides an incomparable and fun learning and growing experience.
- Summer camp teaches leadership, patience, acceptance of different people and their backgrounds. Overall summer camp will create a better person out of anyone who works there.
- I believe it helps you become a person of integrity.
- A great life experience.

- An experience that can be had no where else in the world...of inestimable value. (did I spell that right?)
- There is tremendous value in working at summer camp because it causes you to evaluate your life and consider where God is leading you.
- You do become less self-centered and begin to look for what you can do for others. An outlet for sharing your faith and joy.
- The value of working at a camp as a staff member is huge! It teaches you how to love a child and how to treat them with loving kindness and tender mercy; just as Jesus Christ treats us.
- Character building.
- It helped shape my character and helped me become more independent, in a positive way.
- Ability to do work in a changing environment that is challenging and creates leadership skills.
- I learned how to work with others and how to respect other people's opinions.
- Very amazing and mind blowing.
- It is an experience you will not regret and will remember for the rest of your life.
- I learned as much about myself as I did about the kids who came to enjoy the camp.
- I have learned to grow closer in my relationships to others, my leadership skills have grown immensely, and my spiritual growth was fostered at summer camp.
- I found value in learning new skills, discovering skills I didn't know I had, making friends, experiencing nature, and all types of worship.
- It makes you feel good about yourself and it's enlightening to know that you have had a position as a role model in a kid's life.
- Well, you have to respect the people you work with. you have to listen to your boss. you always have to have a positive attitude when you work there so you wont set a bad example in front of the kids.
- It help you move outside your comfort zone and helps you grow spiritually. Some
- The positive impact of hard work and fun in an outdoor environment combined with the purpose of sharing Christ with others is an unforgettable experience.
- You come out of summer camp a more rounded person. It prepares you by giving you real experiences with other people.
- You get to make an impact in a youth's life and hopefully show Jesus to them.
- It better prepares you for life and a life of service.
- It creates teamwork, it expands leadership skills, it draws you closer to Jesus, it gives you the chance to experience leading someone else to God, it is evangelism, the great commission, to the fullest extent.
- The value is in the variety of skills you learn and the develop with kids and peers. many people i know feel like the staff they work with is more of a family than they have ever experienced before.
- It helps you to grow in leadership skills and priorities.
- The leadership at camp encourages a personal growth that will shine and brighten on others lives. I will always remember the spiritual lessons from camp.
- Learning skills, learning leadership, learning patience, learning compassion.
- The kids are the best part and learning responsibility.
- You learn so much about yourself, your spiritual life, and your tolerance of kids. You learn patience, you learn to work with others and alongside others and God is such a KEY part of camp.
- You learn the importance of positivity, time management, cooperation and leadership
- Working at a summer camp sends you into a leadership role representing our church,

and christianity as a whole tho those who matter, the kids.

- I think the value is out of this world. I don't think we will be able to fully comprehend it until we are in heaven. Camp gives you the ability (with God's help) to impact the lives of all the kids, and all the staff you come in contact with.
- It makes you search deep within to find yourself emotionally, physically, and
- Working as a staff member is of the highest value. Impacting the lives of children, campers and other staff in a positive way is worth everything.
- It has helped me develop many wonderful characteristics that will help me greatly in the future.
- No other environment could offer so many varied opportunities
- You learn important skills concerning childcare, responsibility, teamwork, patience, and commitment.
- I learned lots of things about myself and how I work with others in a team. I also learned more about drama, challenge course, horsemanship and lots of other things.
- Community atmosphere, good friends, spending time with nature, closer walk with God, making a difference in peoples lives.
- Working at camp will put you out of your comfort zone allowing you to grow – growth in a spiritually nurturing environment will strengthen your relationship with God and better prepare you to work more effectively for Him in the future.
- Teaches you how to deal with young people.
- You go through an ministry experience that is unlike any other.
- It brings me closer to God.
- It is fun, it is challenging and a great place to learn about yourself.
- You learn to put others first.
- It give you a chance to meet new people and make friendships that can last forever.
- You'll build great people skills and learn things about yourself as well.
- It teaches responsibility, how to work with kids and care for them, skills, hobbies and how to have a relationship with Jesus.
- Team-ship, service, humility, spirituality...all these things come to mind when I think of camp experience
- It's an experience that won't be repeated anywhere else. You'll be pushed beyond what you thought possible, and come out a much better, more confident person.
- Gives you a sense of responsibility. You have an impact in kids lives.
- It lets you grow. You can not be micro managed all the time so you have to make character choices when no one is watching. Some times you make the wrong choice and a christian director is there to hold you accountable.
- In working as a staff member at a summer camp, I am challenged to give my all working toward a common goal.
- It makes a difference beyond this world.
- I matured and learned so much. There is no measurable value.
- It's a good thing to be a part of; a good thing to support. And there is much to be learned by doing it.
- It can change your life if you let it. You can find out how well you deal with kids of a variety of ages.
- It really brings you down to earth and you realize what really is important in life: establishing healthy relationships with friends and growing closer to God.
- It was fun, helped my work ethic, was a good way to connect with young adventists, and was a place where I could make a difference in children's life.
- It was fun, and life changing.

- It changes your perspective on life and how simple God wants us to live.
- It gives you experiences you'll never forget and grows you in ways that you wouldn't without camp.
- You really learn who you are through the various struggles that come your way when you work at camp. You really learn to be unselfish.
- I feel as though working as a staff member has given me lots of qualities that will be useful later on in life. I learned leadership skills, parenting skills, outdoor skills, etc. Also, while working there you can make friends that will be your friends forever.
- It has made me a better person in about every aspect.
- It helps individuals make friends from all over the country and teaches them life skills and social skills.
- You will be pushed to do things you never believed you were capable of doing.
- The skills developed are important for life; The fun and friendships will never be forgotten.
- Working as a staff member at summer camp gave me freedom to make responsible decisions at a young age. I learned valuable lessons about leadership that I am still using today.
- Learning about yourself, developing interpersonal skills, connecting on a deeper level with God, developing new practical and creative skills, and much more.
- I think that summer camp is a great place to learn and develop your gifts and talents in a christian environment.
- You must be patient
- It is a great place to learn skills in a healthy, fun environment with your friends.
- It teaches you teamwork and people skills.
- Being a staff member at a summer camp is amazing, it's great to meet other youth that are passionate about making a difference in kids' lives.
- Ideally the friendships you will form while at camp are priceless. And not only will you introduce the campers you mentor to camp life but also give them a chance to see Christ. It SHOULD strengthen your relationship to God and your commitment to working with the church.
- The value of working at a summer camp is really priceless. Camp staff and campers alike get to bond and learn new things everyday. We have the opportunity to lead others to Christ.
- It helps you to grow and to lead others to the Lord and in life. Helps you to learn to take charge and lead.
- You learn a lot about yourself.
- Priceless.
- Maturing
- In six weeks at a camp, it equals almost a school year in terms of memories. You can't find that anywhere else.
- Again it is the life skills and the people skills
- Being a staff member at summer camp shaped my character, taught me that work can be more than just a paycheck, and left me memories I'll love forever.
- It's an experience you'll take with you for the rest of your life. This isn't a job that you take because you're bored, it's a job that you are blessed with, a chance to be a leader for Christ at an age where most people don't take you seriously.
- An experience that will be valuable to you for life.
- You will learn a lot of things about yourself.
- Learn leadership skills, ability to work with children, and learn a lot about yourself, including what are the fundamentally important things in life.

- You form a bond with the other staff that lasts for a long time.
- It's a terrific place to gain a variety of skills and experiences, and a safe place to learn what skills and areas are in your strengths and likes/dislikes and a place to learn more about yourself, your world, and relationship with God.
- Working at camp gave me a great place to work where I learned to lead out.
- It is an awesome experience that you remember for the rest of your life. It helped me connect responsibility, fun, and Jesus (Christianity).
- Summer camp can bring lifetime friendships into your life, strengthens your relationship with Christ, and gives you self-confidence.
- Friendships, leadership skills, learning to work as part of a team with a common goal are all important attributes of a good staff experience.
- The value of working as a staff member is high because it teaches you responsibility, work ethic, sense of community, and gets you friends for life.
- The value is both for others and yourself. You as a person grow, as well as get to share with others.
- Summer camp is one of the best summer jobs, not only financially (due to scholarships and free room/board) but it is also an opportunity to grow in maturity and to see God away from all the daily distractions.
- Extremely valuable. In my early days, it helped to shape me into what I am today.
- Teamwork, spiritual focus, nature, fun.
- I learned many new things and was able to teach kids.
- You learn new skills, grow in talents you didn't know you had, make lifelong friends.
- One learns to rely on self (through Christ who strengthens us) and others.
- I think being a staff member helps prepare you for the workforce. You work with the same people everyday and you work as a team.
- It's an experience you'll never forget and it will grow you professionally and spiritually.
- Working at camp teaches you how to take any situation and make it work for the best.
- The learning experience is amazing. The personal discovery is a gift that you cannot repay.
- You learn more about yourself and what you are really able to do.
- The value for me is that I had no where else to go and it was a safe, loving environment. I learned to think, served others and it was a lot of fun too!
- You learn leadership skills, how to work well with others, and how attitude is everything.
- You can't put a value on a fun environment with such a closeness to friends and God.
- Learning to work as a team, to think outside of the box and to problem solve.
- Staff -- character building, and creates independence on your own religious experience.
- Changes your life. You are never the same after working at camp and experiencing the things you do.
- Friends, experience, vacation while working, relationship to God.
- Team work.



Compassion and Care

- You know you are making a difference. It takes all areas of the staff to make everything at camp run/work, if some were missing the camp would be different...bad.
- The value is high because you get to work with kids personally impacting their lives.
- I made some excellent friends and memories. In interacting with my campers, I feel like we made a mutual impact on each other, and learned a lot!

- It gives you the chance to give back to kids what was given to you as a kid....to share hope with kids who really need it.
- They can share so much with others - often by just being there.
- The job you're doing is so valuable to the kids we're working with. You're shaping lives.
- You are working with a great group of people for a positive change in others. It's amazing!
- You certainly get an opportunity to share your values with young people
- It's a place to work with kids and reach out to them and also make friends with the staff!
- You're making a difference in kids' lives.
- It's great!
- The opportunity to witness the transformation in someone's life when they see God presented in a new way, whether it be through dramas, songs, horses, wake-boarding, whatever it is that clicks and makes an impact is something priceless and that value is what I see as a staff member.
- It's probably one of the few places in life where you get to take your beliefs, passions, hobbies, and use them everyday to bring a smile to a child's face.
- It is a fun venue that children and adults can't usually get. People are more open to learning in a fun environment.
- You get to help lead kids to live productive healthy lives.
- You have an opportunity to make a great impact on one or more persons' life.
- It is a time when you may go to give but you receive.
- It can be a good thing, but could be better if everyone that worked there was really being the people that God wants them to be.
- You can reach kids during activities and casual conversation that could not be reached in any formal setting. You learn teamwork and leadership. You make lifelong friends.
- You will be changed. You will feel a part of something very important. You will belong to a group of wonderful dedicated people who want to make an impact in young people's lives.
- Camp will give you the opportunity to have lots of fun and make a difference!
- Camp staff is probably what kids remember the most from camp I think, or at least it's up there on the list. A person grows when they dedicate a few weeks of their summer to work at a kids' summer camp.
- This is one of those things you can't put a value on. It is priceless. The people I worked at camp with were fabulous people, and we all agree those were some of the best summers of our lives.
- It's great if you intend to stay in the Adventist system and are wanting to network, make friends, etc.



Miscellaneous.

- Being able to work in a non-threatening environment where everyone is fun and friendly and works together as a team and enjoys the hard work.
- But it is a good place to make connections with people. And if a person is wanting to work in the Seventh-day Adventist system it is a good idea.
- I believe that it is extremely valuable to work at a summer camp that is well run.
- Its great to be around other youth who are serving the Lord with all their heart and then to be reaching out to kids who really are hungering for God.

(This summary is a representative selection of the categories analyzed by way of content analysis. Duplications and similar statements have been eliminated from the list for economy.)*

APPENDIX D

"If you can or cannot recommend staff employment" (Reasons)*



Negative Comments

- Working at camp is definitely a rewarding and challenging job, however, due to the fact that our SDA schools place such a high value on a year of school it is really not cost effective to work at a camp.
- I would never want my friends or family to be associated with the SDA church.
- I left camp with bad memories concerning the camp administration about 15 years ago. Maybe if the circumstances had been different, but I didn't like how I was treated by the administrator at times.
- I wouldn't suggest this low-paying, long-hours job to anyone who wasn't going hard after God.
- Not as a significant money earning summer.
- I never once got a good night's rest. Not enough sleep ruined my camp experience and in some ways my campers as well. This job should, at the least, have a description stating this fact.
- I didn't like the way the camp director chose to run the camp and there was a great lack of communication between administrative staff and other staff members. This past summer compared to others the staff never become a team.
- The Camp was understaffed and there was next to no leadership at all from the administration
- I highly recommend working at camp. It was one of the best experiences in my life. But I wouldn't recommend working in the kitchen, I did not enjoy my experience in that area at all.
- The summer camp experience has changed from its positive nature that it held in the past to a negative experience that I would not suggest.



"In your experience, if you could change anything at camp, what would you change to make your staff experience better and more positive?" (Reasons)*

- ✓• Have more opportunity for small group activities.
- ✓• I would have liked to have been more involved in programming the spiritual activities.
- ✓• Better and more regular internet access.
- ✓• More time when the counselors can interact with the general staff members.
- ✓• A more detailed code of conduct with an outline of disciplinary action for staff members or a disciplinary manual would have helped me as assistant director to know how to handle situations of staff misconduct with more tact and certainty.
- ✓• Nothing. It was just the best two summers of our families lives. We were able to have our three sons with us and wife was cook so everyone loved her, she was mom to all the staff.
- ✓• The pay stinks, you get NO TIME OFF hardly, it's a 24/7 job and very stressful. Lots of politics and such. I would advise more staff meetings that aren't at 5 am. Perhaps later in the day when everyone's AWAKE and can even function. I would suggest actual interviews of prospective counselors and their friends to see if they are actually Christians rather than just hiring someone because they're "popular" or because their mom and dad are pastors or teachers. A lot of spoiled SDA brats working there that

didn't know Jesus and that made it hard. If I could change anything, I would have not worried so much about what other people thought about me and just lived the gospel whether I got teased for it or not. Sadly, I did get teased by other staff members for being too spiritual.

- Not a thing.
- More time to rest.
- I should have worked at camps for more than 2 years. I should have started working at camps earlier on in life.
- More mosquito eating bats.
- The organization of Sunday turn-around and the negative attitudes that come with that day. It's extremely stressful and unpleasant.
- I would like to still be there.
- I would change the lack of breaks in between each activity and create more free time so the cabin can bond more
- The people in charge are good, but they need new blood, new ideas and open minds.
- Provide training to all staff about how their role in a camper's experience and how they can positively model Christianity.
- I can't think of anything to change. I had a very positive experience.
- Stay focused on the real reason I was working at camp.... the kids!
- I wish I would've spent more summers there and tried different jobs.
- Less about money and politics, more about faith.
- Spend less time focusing on the negative and more on the positive.
- We as Adventists need to learn more about how to pray and how to pray together. Our maturity here is sorely lacking and it is manifested in the level of spiritual maturity we're able to offer our campers - and each other. This is a place of growth, to be sure; I simply believe that we can do more.
- I wouldn't change a thing.
- A little more personal time for the counselors outside of their days off.
- The communication process among the staff needed serious help. I was in the dark about so many things, and it got very frustrating. Also, counselors need more time off--all the staff do. We were nearly worked to death. It was worth it in the end, but I was sure exhausted!
- I can't think of anything right now.
- More preparation time to be able to be more intentional for all aspects of camp work.
- Not care so much what others thought of me.
- Politics related to the conference and the attitudes of some pastors and leaders toward the effectiveness of camps.
- Maybe I have selective memory, but I can't think of one thing that could have made it better. I had an absolute blast.
- More staff members as to lessen the load on each staff member. 39. More proactive about spiritual growth.
- I don't see how my bad experience at camp could have been made better, other than ensuring that any rule or guideline applied to all workers in the camp. No exceptions.
- I need to reach out more. Being in the kitchen most of the time I don't get to know the other staff and campers as much as I would like to.
- Not really sure how to answer this one. It was so long ago, and honestly I don't recall a truly negative experience at camp. It was a blast.

- I would have reduced the amount of things we had to do. There was never any free time, and when there was, I was always sleeping.
- I would have worked more summers!
- A more spiritually driven staff.
- I don't know. I was pretty happy.
- Make sure communication channels stay open. Leadership team members often play favorites and when petty drama happens it can't be resolved quickly or effectively because sides are taken inappropriately. I would like for the head people that run the camp not to be two faced, and to be real Christians not just saying one thing but living another life
- A bit more off time so staff members to not become so worn out.
- I don't think there really is anything that I would change.
- More sleep!
- I would be more outgoing and less shy.
- Staff training week is crucial to setting the tone for the summer. I would make sure to balance area prep time with social bonding time.
- It's been 15 years now. I have only positive memories of the kids I cared for and the staff I worked with.
- My least favorite part of camp were increased and stricter rules applying to everyone after my first summer because of a select few staff members who were mainly hired due to nepotism that snuck off campus to do bad things. After that the director was much stricter with the rules for everyone which always was a sore spot I had with him.
- Hire older staff so that some of the laws can be loosened; by the time I got to my 3rd summer, I was 22 years old and Camp felt much like prison...and the laws continued to be tightened down. Hire better staff & older staff so that they can be trusted more - a person who feels like he is trusted will work harder and be more faithful and will give his all more freely. A slave will inevitably look for loopholes and gaps for freedom. It seems to me that by your strictness, you created the need for the rules to be so tight...and the tighter you made them, the tighter they needed to be. Hire good people that can be trusted; and trust them. Take away privileges if they are abused - don't just take them away a priori just as a precaution; makes the staff feel like they are being treated like 3rd graders.
- Make summer camp longer.
- The hypocrisy.
- Nothing. The leadership of camp could not be possibly any better. It is literally the all star team, the best of the best. They are the reason my camp has the best staff in the country.
- Less gossip among larger camp staffs.
- I would try to build lasting values and training experience - make camp educational and fun. Not just for fun with a little education thrown in. I would bring back the passion for Jesus intentionally, not just haphazardly as it often is. Unfortunately, many new directors are simply not trained for service, some seem to be interested in toys more than training leaders. I believe that camps and youth ministry require our very best pastors and leaders - directors who are trained to be camp directors, not just pastors who like young people.
- The first summer was tough because I was bullied by a camp staff supervisor (college student) I was new and didn't feel like I could go to anybody for help.
- To prepare your staff in advance for blind camp and the possibility that they might be counselors for the blind during that week. It was very scary being told that the week before the blind campers were coming and barely any training was involved - a 19 year

old expected to take care of several dependent blind people is not the most appropriate situation!

- I loved every minute of it
- I wouldn't change anything. I have enjoyed it. You have your good and bad days, but they even out at the end of the summer.
- Have fewer responsibilities on individuals, in other words, hire more staff.
- Shorter hours and more free time, but I think that is just the nature of the job.
- Well, our camp doesn't give much time off. We didn't really even get a full day!
- The director's personal skills. Wed, 11/19/08 9:12 PM
- I wouldn't change it because what I experienced is what God knew I needed. It was an awesome experience.
- From what I have heard this had since changed, but while I was at Leoni there were often conflicts between the summer camp staff and the year-round staff regarding priorities. I think at any Adventist summer camp, whether the majority of money made by the camp comes from year round retreats and events or not, should be clear to any staff involved with the camp, year round or summer staff, that the main focus of the camp should be the children. (Especially in a church growing older by the second)
- I would've worked MORE summers! :) Perhaps a bit more time for the staff to grow spiritually. IE: Maybe a 2 week staff training period that focuses on teaching kids to love Jesus, as well as, focusing on the RELATIONSHIP each staff member has with Christ.
- The only aspect of MiVoden that was not pleasurable was the camp director. His interactions with the staff in dealing with problems and overall management was unfortunately lacking.
- I can't imagine changing anything.
- More freedom for staff members.
- Maybe I've forgotten any negative; it was all good in my mind.
- I wouldn't change a thing--I learned from my mistakes.
- More support of the camp from the conferences so we are able to do more things so that the camp is more attractive to the public. This will help us bring more children to Christ.
- More time with the campers.
- Higher pay! Just kidding!
- I would love to have been hired a summer or two before so I could experience several times.
- Make summer last longer!
- Better staff parking!
- Not be quite so busy.
- Working with people who had overall better work ethics. You sometimes get some staff that aren't there for the right reasons.
- A little bit more rest/time off. I think that having a few more staff members on board might help and possibly having more staff members ages 20 and up. It was a little crazy trying to get enough personal worship time in every morning because I was tired from not getting enough sleep.
- A female as assistant director. It would help balance the men out and be easier in dealing with problems women may face that the men can't relate to.
- Teach a different class than I did and use the things I've learned to relate better to my campers.

- I would have changed some of the ways the camp was run from an administrative level. Keep in mind, though, that it has been 7 years since I have worked there so things have probably changed a lot since then.
- Perhaps more staff members to share the workload? Even just one. By the last two weeks, it's very difficult to work as efficiently or with as much gusto as the beginning of the summer.
- More opportunity to explain before being accused.
- Not have other staff belittle you and yell at you in front of a cafeteria full of people (family camp).
- Having the night end sooner. Having programs end earlier at night.
- A couple of more free minutes here and there during the day.. More time to rest. I remember burning out pretty hard with the 6 days a week schedule.
- In general no. I think that I would have tried to have just had a more positive attitude but other than that no. The camp was well run and a positive environment.
- The only thing that I might do is knock out the wall separating the two rooms where the girls sleep. There are about 8 girls in each cabin, and 4 to a room, but that always seems to create chaos.
- The head counselor wasn't always as supportive and encouraging when I needed it. I made a mistake, and wished the response from the head counselor would have been more positive (with an intent on helping me grow).
- I would get in more time for sleep, so that I could enjoy the awake times more. Most of the staff seemed sleep-deprived, and that's why I couldn't keep working there.
- Perhaps more staff building during the summer (not just staff training). Our Admin. did a good job - we did some other times - more might kept the vision before us even more.
- This is something I'd been thinking about a lot post-camp, and to be honest, I rarely to virtually never felt uncomfortable about what/how we were presenting to the campers. But there were times when I felt uncomfortable, not about what the staff did on days off, or in personal time, but at staff parties/staff nights. I figured that if our attitude should be clean around campers, why not around each other?
- Better teamwork. Broader spreading of responsibilities but better coordinated. Better pre-planning. Stronger spiritual framework.
- Continued follow up and involvement of current and past staff and alumni of our summer camp, this is a huge resource (alumni) that is being underutilized.
- I would have started working at camp sooner!
- Counselors would not be teaching as many class periods. (I think that has changed since I worked at camp.)
- Often at camp we were exhausted because of the demand of the job and the lack of funding. It would have been nice to have had more time to develop relationships with God and other staff members.
- I wouldn't work in the office, someone should have noticed this about me!
- I had very positives staff experiences. I wouldn't change anything. Even the times when I had some of the hardest jobs other members of staff jumped in to support me. I can't complain.
- Spread programing out to include all of the staff not just a select popular few, you never know who might pop out of a shell.
- I wish I would have finished stronger.
- At my Camp, the counseling in the dorm atmosphere was very challenging. Mainly because if you had just got your cabin to sleep and then a kid in the dorm room above you jumped down from his bunk, it was really noisy and would wake up your guys again.

I think separate cabins like other camps I have heard about would make that experience better.

- Even more time spent in training for new staff. Especially helping campers make commitments to Christ.
- Nothing. For outpost staff we had a lot of opportunities to bond and become a team. Future outpost camps might need more of the bonding opportunities. Outpost staff need to really work together. My experience was very good.
- Going over all the rules before campers arrived made me feel like I had to watch them every second or I was going to be fired for negligence.
- I don't know that I could. I can honestly say that almost all of the greatest moments of my life took place at camp. My closest friends to this day are people I met at camp. even now I still think about going back and spending my summer vacations as a camp staff member.
- Administration positions should strive to hold their staff responsible for following all rules.
- Have worked at camp even more summers!
- Allow more things that liability removed over time: Trampolines, obstacle courses, allowing kids from the same cabin to do different activities from each other...
- More pastoral follow up with campers after camp.
- The administration would be slightly less-focused on running camp and greatly more-focused on caring for and ministering to its camp staff. There were too many times that I felt completely unsupported by the directors (who were basically my pastors each summer) because the support that I needed might have somehow gone against the "Camp". I left my last summer glad that I was never coming back, and my leadership skills were damaged because I was not supported in my leadership. The experience had many good points, but by the end, it was greatly soured. I (and others I worked with) needed more spiritual support and encouragement from the leaders we were working so hard to please and from the "Way" that we were trying to live.
- Nothing, I came back for so many years because I thought the program worked to meet the needs of both campers and staff of the generations at camp those years.
- More short breaks throughout the week.
- More knowledge about what I was teaching campers. Example: Archery, Canoeing.
- Having ALL staff as committed to serving Christ and representing Him to the campers.
- I would have tried not to date any other staff members. It wasn't a negative experience but I felt I could have focused more on the work God intended for me to do.
- Make Christ utmost in everything. Have daily worship/praise groups for staff.
- To spend more time with campers and not so much time in the cafe.
- Discipline and Supervision. Also, more devotional core program setups for personal time.
- I would help conferences realize that state and ACA standards are in place to protect campers and staff.
- I would have asked for more space at the beginning of all my troubles.
- More interaction with the campers. I was often cooped up in the kitchen.
- Hire a few more staff. We were spread so thin and were so busy that we really didn't have any down-time except for our day off.
- Better living conditions, more staff members to carry the load (we had many responsibilities each and it became really overwhelming)
- Encourage others to remain positive and constantly encourage one another.
- More communication and allowing staff to do a variety of things.

- I felt a bit of a negative tone a couple years I worked there. Have a little positive mental attitude.
- Nothing. It was amazing--even the things I hated at the time were good for me and helped me to become the person I am today.
- One director that I worked for thought it was better to hire nearly all high school students because they were cheaper, but I think the camp suffered as a result. It's great to hire younger staff for some positions, but some jobs really need someone older and more mature. There are many problems when all the staff is the same age as or barely older than the campers.
- The administration has to be even more careful with the staff they choose. Some are not committed to the Lord. The administration needs to affirm all good workers.
- Rules accommodating ages.
- Camp is very pushed. As I got older and continued to work there are certain things that seemed to apply to a younger staff much more than a staff that is in a leadership position.
- I would adjust the schedule to create time for counselors to lead their cabins in morning devotionals. I would also adjust the staff and counselor training to emphasize the mission of camp being so much more than a summer job that is fun but that it is a mission.
- I think it is different for every camp, but for camp I would change the way the administration works. I would give more responsibility to the staff members and let them run the show instead of trying to run them. In my opinion the administration tries to do everything which makes things more chaotic and stressful than they need to be.
- Have the administrative staff be more involved in helping the counselors. That was a problem this summer. Also, increased communication between administration and counselors.
- There were a few unrealistic expectations placed on us, which made it a relatively high-stress summer
- Get paid more (I'm a volunteer - and even if I did get paid, it wouldn't be as much for me because I'm not a student, so I wouldn't benefit from the scholarship match program provided by the schools - maybe if I could have my work apply toward my child's school expenses, and maybe if that scholarship could sit and wait for a year or two or three - we homeschool - so we would like to 'stock-pile' it for when my children hit college. Even my daughter would like to do that, when she starts working at camp in another year or two.)
- I would change the pay situation. It shouldn't matter what grade you are in, but how much you work, how much you participate, and how good your attitude is. Just because your in a high grade shouldn't mean you get paid more.
- I would have done MORE things that I have never tried.
- I would have changed the summer camp director because he doesn't know how to communicate and did a poor job.
- Be a little more open and involved in camp activities.
- I would make it less intense and busy. Camp burn out is so common, and you just want to hibernate when it's all over.
- More openness of bosses to yell at me when I am doing stupid things.
- New administration and more staff.
- Make the staff administrators more consistent. If they hired me for a job, let me do that job, I asked for it and you hired me for it for a reason. Also, I would ask for the administrators to consider every job as an important job, not just the ones that get automatically recognized.

- COMMUNICATION!!!!!!
- I would have a better check system for the administration running the camp. I worked for a director although nice drove me into the ground. I needed support and had nothing.
- Try to lead more.
- I would continue to make camp a place of prayer and relationship with God... that is the only way that it can continue to get better.
- I personally made some mistakes and didn't get involved as much as I would have liked, but there was nothing that the camp could have done to prevent that.
- I would really like to be able to bring more kids in and have a bigger facility to bring them in so we are able to minister to them.
- I would change bad the attitudes of my fellow staff members.
- I think that I might facilitate a little deeper dialogue, to settle some of the questions or dichotomies that can become spiritual roadblocks to people, or just to share thoughts, praises, individual perspectives, some more group discussion about issues that we all have to deal with, and maybe a little less rigid of structure, to be deeply focused as well as action focused. But overall, I have few complaints. If my experience was at all tainted this summer, it wasn't ever a reflection of camp.
- More people that were specifically assigned to help out with many of the large challenge course projects.
- Emphasis on teamwork among the staff. This always got to be a problem among the staff about halfway through the summer when everyone got tired and stressed.
- I would change the way that the camp was run. The list of problems is too long to state.
- Another hour or two of sleep each night would be nice - nothing important.
- Taking more time with the kids.
- Improving communication between administration and staff is crucial. Allowing time for staff fellowship is also very important.
- Well the camp does need some remodeling, and perhaps kitchen staff could use a little more help.
- Find a way to have more time.
- Have the meetings start/end on time
- The staff was overworked. It was often stressful the number of hours we put in and the numerous roles we were expected to fulfill.
- If there are rules, then they should be followed by everyone, not just a select few. I believe that there should be more consequences for those who do not choose to follow the rules that are in our contracts.
- I know there need to be rules but sometimes you can have so many rules that it is too much to handle.
- I would reduce the amount of red tape hanging on some of the activities and needs of the camp. It is frustrating to come in with a bunch of staff who are enthusiastic and ready to get the work done and find some administration outside of the camp setting who do not see the value in what we do. Pastors especially should be behind this ministry all the way because we are the front lines in a missionary sense to a lot of people.
- Make sure the staff is there for the right reasons!!!! If they're just working there because they think it's a "vacation for pay", get rid of them! A devoted staff make or break a child's camp experience.
- One of the directors I worked with left a lot to be desired.
- More resources.

- We need more discipline, we need to encourage our beliefs, we cannot be open to break the rules. Also, we need to be a little more rigorous when selective the stuff. We need to choose the right people. There are many factors that will determine if we are going to choose this person. We need to carefully examine them... even the kitchen staff. Praying about it a lot, the kids will pay the consequences if we do not choose right.
- Not much, really, except maybe, better equipped in terms of the different activities.
- Sabbaths would be more like sabbath. More restful, instead of one of the biggest days of the week.
- The constituents of the conference to pay tithe and donate to camp ministry. It is the biggest and best form of evangelism the church has but underfunded.
- Eliminate non-constructive criticism of camp. (i.e., eliminate whining. It steals my enthusiasm.)
- More direction as to how to improve in my job at camp.
- My personal attitude, nothing about the camp.
- Communication is key- make sure that the staff members know what's going on and what they need to do- that way no one is disappointed!
- More personal time for the staff.
- Would probably create a little bit more off-time for counselors. They are constantly on the job, and could use a little rest
- Being able to share more time with staff.
- This last year was great. Communication between staff members a little better.
- It would be nice to have a little more time off.
- More time for the staff to hang out after the end of camp.
- I would cause staff to continually lift each other up and support them in their task not believing that one job is harder or easier than another.
- Give everyone the power to go without sleep and still be as effective/never get emotionally, physically or spiritually drained :)
- Giving the counselors more of a break.
- Better training weeks for waterfront staff--more training in back-boarding, CPR and anything else needed in an emergency situation in case of an accident. A lot of the spiritual growth that staff experience is more or less by accident; I'd like to see more intentional time devoted to spiritual development for staff.
- Politics. These are everywhere though. Write down the correct t-shirt sizes on my application form next time
- As a younger staff member - I really wanted to feel supported and appreciated by administration. I definitely felt this way as I got older - however - I really think we need to put an emphasis on encouraging younger staff members who are perhaps struggling with various elements of camp.
- Continued work on organization and programming, we would come as staff without much training, and didn't want to go it on our own.

(This summary is a representative selection of the categories analyzed by way of content analysis. Duplications and similar statements have been eliminated from the list for economy.)*

APPENDIX E



"Share a brief experience that you remember that would help someone make a decision to become a camp staff member at summer camp." *

- It was great place to grow in all aspects of life: Spiritual, mental, physical, new skills and life habits that have benefited me ever since.
- I got to spend time with people that were later to become my friends.
- The friendships you gain from your fellow staff members is amazing and uplifting.
- I can't think of a better way to have spent the summers of my adolescence.
- Being a camp staff member was rewarding in the fact that I was able to be a counselor which was an amazing experience. It was great being able to work with kids, and help guide them to a closer relationship with Christ.
- Working on staff at camp will provide you with experience you can't get in school and allow you to see what God can do in your life if you let him. You'll have the opportunity to explore what it means to fellowship and worship while discipling young people.
- The camp directors believed in me and helped me make good choices. They took a personal interest in my life, and I am still friends with them to this day.
- You will never regret working at camp. Realize that working at summer camp means helping kids who may not know Christ get an idea of who Christ is and what he can do in their lives.
- I felt it brought me to a place of service and team-ship that I had not had since academy. It was a good experience to be with others my own age that were involved in ministry for Jesus and not out just being self-serving.
- I made lasting friendships and grew in Christ.
- You get to hang out with your friends all summer and do fun things. You get scholarship money.
- Working at Camp is without a doubt a turning point in my life. I worked there to lead others to Jesus, and in so doing developed a deeper relationship with him than I had imagined.
- Camp helps you grow and learn in ways that you'll never find in the secular work force. You are surrounded by amazing, loving peers who are seeking the same things you are, and are there to support you. Working 100% for God is a reward in itself.
- God performed a miracle in my cabin of campers. They were the most unruly, loud clique of girls I had ever had to deal with, and I had no idea what to do. I prayed so much, and it was AMAZING the transformation! During that week one of my campers, who was not a Christian, decided to give her heart to God, and she is currently attending an Adventist church. The whole cabin came together in a way I couldn't have imagined at the beginning of the week, and God showed me what He can do, and what He can do through me when I give it all into His hands. It changed my life forever.
- The first annual PSR fair, watching all the kids, eating all great food, and enjoying time to just let the kids have fun without worrying about them hurting themselves.
- Being able to do a variety of things - some you have never tried before - in the context of a supportive Christian atmosphere was a great learning situation that has resulted in 21 summers of work at camps now.
- This past summer our staff performed a couple of very powerful dramas on Friday night. On the last week of camp for the summer we felt God's presence there that night when a woman who was going to commit suicide that night found hope and the possibility of future through the dramas and the words that were shared. That one person is why I went to work at camp last summer.

- The whole experience: Skiing, swimming, riding horses, camping out, raiding the wife, friends in general, campfires, capture the flag.
- Some of the best summers of my life! Built friendships for life.
- A kid who was in my sports class got homesick one night and asked if he could sit with me. It was the Friday night service and they were talking about the resurrection. We began to talk about how much God loves us and how amazing that is. He was crying and I put my arm around him and gave him a hug. It was great to connect with someone like that.
- The littlest things you do and say will be taken note by your campers. Make sure you have a clear relationship with Christ before you even think about applying.
- While I found the friendliness of the staff very uplifting, overall I found many discrepancies on policies that would apply to one staff member but not others. I found many cases of discriminatory treatment and people getting singled out and/or dismissed due to camp directors' reactionary treatment in situations. Widespread disciplinary policies were installed, only to be ignored or a blind eye turned to members of staff with more seniority. However, I must admit that the staff members at the time are no longer running the camp so my experience is limited to about 15 years ago.
- Being a camp staff doesn't end when the summer is over. We built friendships and relationships with other camp staff and campers. We still have the opportunity to witness to future campers and other future camp staff. Its a spiritual blessing.
- One young man lives in an area where he has no other young SDA's his age and goes to public tech. When he came here he could see other SDA's living for the Lord and it made a big difference in his life. What a blessing to see.
- Working at camp is priceless. I had too many great experiences to narrow it down. The friends you make and the fun that is had at camp is amazing. Yes you work very hard all day long, but it's so much fun.
- Finding God present in the nature on a daily basis was one of the greatest things that I experienced during this last summer. Whether it was walking back and gazing at the stars, seeing the mountains in the early morning, or watching the horizon when the sun went down were all places where I experienced God on a very intimate level.
- I have the opportunity to see kids grow both in themselves and in Christ and it's exciting to be a part of their development. Camp is almost never ending work and it doesn't pay a lot. However, you can't put a price tag on the experience. I've often said that everyone needs to work at a camp for at least one summer. It's too important.
- While it is often demanding and tiring the rewards that you receive triple the expenditure. I often felt that camp was the cement that held the rocky foundation that was started in school and made it solid.
- I grew up going to camp, and it changed my life drastically and permanently. I became a camp staff member because I wanted to opportunity to give another kid the same experience that I had. In today's world, these kids are hurting, their lives are unbalanced and they are searching for some stability. Camp becomes a safe haven for them, not just in location but also in relationships. It will be a part of them for the rest of their lives, and if God blesses you with that chance, take it. It's worth everything you put into it and more. You don't have to save the world, you just have to take the time to love it.
- Just seeing someone give there life to our lord and Savior is totally worth a summer at camp.
- It is the best social & spiritual environment you will ever find to work in, and it will proved responsibility and leadership experience you will draw on for the rest of your life.
- It was some of the best years of my life. I believe I gained allot of confidence in sharing Christ with others.
- The joy of introducing kids to Jesus, some of them for the very first time.

- Being with the blind campers who came to camp with very little on top of being blind and having such a happy attitude. To be able to help them do things they never got to do was an awesome experience. Especially when I got to see them 3 summers in a row.
- It's an experience that provides you with healthy outdoor exercise, exposure to more experiences than you'd ever thought possible, and friendships that last a lifetime, plus time for reflection on your life, goals, and relationship to God and others.
- The smiles on the faces of campers make it worth working at camp. Ten years after working at camp, those memories are still some of my best. I still miss it!
- Providing today's young people with positive Christian role models, healthy recreation and godly environment are needed more than ever. Camp gives exactly these opportunities, and may even lead a young person to make a life-long decision to be a disciple of Jesus.
- I remember having great discussions with the teen campers after some of the campfire skits. I especially remember one cabin of girls who were from various backgrounds and religions and talking about God and salvation, it was fun to see them interact and discuss their different beliefs and what they were learning about God at camp. It was exciting to see how camp impacted them.
- I remember being inspired seeing the blind learn how to waterski. Working at camp, it's easy to think you're there to minister to others, when a lot of the time, others (including campers) are actually ministering to you.
- A lot of work but worth it for the rewards. I remember one night the horsemanship director and I spent the entire night searching for an electrical short, we finally found it about five am. when he had to leave to feed the horses I finished fixing the problem and a new day started
- I loved working at camp so much because of the amazing environment of spirituality and kindness. I always wished I was more spiritual but I never actively pursued this but when I would go to camp I would be surrounded by a spiritual environment which felt so good to be around that again.
- The relationships I established while in a Christian environment; the atmosphere made an impression on me and my decisions about various things-right/wrong, how to treat people, etc.
- I've never worked harder; but I've never been more excited about my job. I've never been paid less, but I would have done it for free. I've never been closer to God and had to depend on him more than when I worked at camp. It is worth every moment & every drop of sweat & every sleep-deprived morning.
- On Sunday when all the kids for the week are getting ready to leave and your cabin or kids in your classes come up to you and say they will never forget you and want to work at camp just because they want to be just like you, it is all worth it.
- Being a summer camp staff person is one of the best decisions I have ever made. It has developed me into the person I am today, plus making many contacts.
- After struggling with my faith for nearly a year, I found God and the answer to many of my questions during the final Friday night service the first summer I worked at camp.
- Camp can be a wonderful growing experience. I urge you to seek the Lord's will for your life and work at camp to receive leadership training and experience in changing people's lives.
- It is a lot of fun and you make amazing friendships.
- The bonds you make at camp are not just with your friends. They are made strongly with Jesus Himself! The time you serve at Camp will be remembered as one of the best times of your life. How many times had I chastised myself for not returning back for another year of summer staff! Take the plunge for the decision to become staff of your local camp - you'll be glad you did!

- I was able to teach crafts and the kids looked up to me. I never knew I was capable of that kind of impact.
- Sitting in the boat down by the lake, late at night, under the moon and stars, with other counselors and counselors-in-training, we all bonded in ways we never could have anywhere else.
- All the campfire programs. They are such a comforting and fun end to a long day of work! Everyone cozy around the fire, singing and acting for the kids, bonding with other staff members...it is an incredible experience working at a summer camp - you won't regret it!
- It is life changing! You will do and experience things you would never imagine. It grows you as a person in enormous ways.
- Loads of fun. Spiritually rewarding.
- After being a blessing to kids all day you have the opportunity to be blessed by fellow staff members who care about you and want to share your burdens. One night I stayed up late talking with a fellow staff and we both grew so much from sharing together. I'll never forget that night.
- Well, I can't really look to any one defining moment and point to it as a favorite moment. But Camp has such a close, caring, family environment; offering both structure and freedom.
- Camp is a wonderful experience. You become close to people that you wouldn't have ever thought you would get along with. You learn a lot and experience good and bad things with new friends.
- To me it was a thrill and joy when late one night, one of my teen campers came to my bed asking questions about the Bible and God was able to use me not only to explain it to her, but to comfort her as she wept painful tears b/c of what she's gone through.
- I found out camp wasn't for me and ended up having a negative experience. Camp is great for some people though.
- I remember an eleven year old camper I had during blind camp who had been diagnosed with macular degeneration. Watching how he dealt with that and the zeal with which he approached life taught me a lesson I will never forget
- Summer Camp has been one of my favorite memories, and will continue to be throughout my life. Not only did I make life long Christian friends, but I strengthened my own spirituality and I got to show Jesus to young people. It is simply an amazing time in your life and you only have one chance to experience it! I will encourage my own children to become staff members, and I hope I can encourage other young people to get involved with camp.
- As I think back it is hard to put in words the feeling that goes with connecting with a child. But one incident that stands out to me was with a small child from a large city. As we were walking back to the main camp one night the child was looking up into the starry sky and said after awhile " Wow, I never knew there so many stars, they look so close you could almost touch them." Then the child slipped his hand into mine and we continued on.
- I had no previous experience with video editing. Through my experience at Camp, I learned multiple video editing techniques and skills I now use constantly. Also, there is nothing quite like helping a child see the amazing relationship he/she can have with a loving God.
- Absolutely best summers of my life. Absolutely!
- One of the greatest benefits of working at camp is the friendships. The people I worked at camp with are my closest friends to this day, not to mention that it's where I met my future husband.

- The unity, working together as a team, the support and encouragement to live for the glory of God is amazing! I worked so hard but never felt so valued and had such a purpose. Great experience!!!
- My fellow staff members showed more support and positive interactions than anywhere I've been before. Being around people that love God and are there to serve others is contagious, and wonderful!
- I was a counselor for many summers. I had each camper fill out a 3x5 card with their name, address, hobbies and 3 things they liked best about camp. After camp was over, I would write a brief letter to each camper. I loved each camper. Now when I visit camp, I have these adults come up to me who are bringing their kids to camp and say, "Hey, you were my camp counselor. I really appreciated you. Now I'm bringing my kids to camp so they can experience the positive things I did." One life changing time happened during junior camp. The parents of a little girl in my cabin were driving home from dropping their daughter at camp. A Yield sign was run and the mother was killed. Her dad came the next afternoon to tell her what happened. I still remember feeling helpless about what to do for worship. I just prayed in my heart and sat the girls on the bottom bunks and the little girl was the first to speak, "Can we read the 23rd Psalm tonight? My mom would read that to me every night." We read it, and then she said, "You know, I think Jesus prepared me for this time. An angel sent me a dream about 3 nights ago that something really, really bad happened to my mom. I think I won't be so sad now. I know I'll see her again." Of course, we were all crying and we all prayed and recommitted our lives to Jesus. I still praise God that I had the opportunity to work at camp so I could BE THERE for kids when they were going through difficult times, whether death or questionings or family troubles. To share Jesus' love brings the most joy ever.
- Working at camp will challenge you in many great ways and provide you with experiences you will never forget.
- After coming back from working at camp, a lot of the same people went to my college, it was a great way of meeting new people.
- Hands down, working at a summer camp was the most exhilarating and liberating experience. It prepared me for just about anything-nothing seems too outrageous or too difficult after the success achieved at summer camp.
- I loved foot washing in the lake with the Staff during training week -- that was exhilarating
- Blind and DD is the most humbling, hilarious, and most peaceful time of the entire summer. True story.
- Camp had a significant impact on my life when I was a kid attending camp as a camper. I wanted to be a part of making a difference in kids' lives.
- I went through a hard time while working at camp. My father suffered a major heart attack, and I thought I would have to leave, but the friends I had there supported me and prayed for me and for the health of my dad. I ended up staying and never regretted it for one second. It helped me to decide that I really wanted to be a teacher!
- I loved meeting the Awesome staff and hanging out with them. I got to rock climb for the first time and also go on the rock wall. The kids were great and I enjoyed watching them change during the short week they were at camp. I loved it, wish I had been accepted to work sooner.
- These were the best summers of my life and helped to form who I am. I am a better person because of the relationships I made both with other staff members, as well as God while working at camp.
- The friends you make will last a lifetime...the experience is non threatening and a great way to get into the work world. Helps build self esteem.
- The staff all have the same purpose, and that is to bring people to Jesus. Because this focus, you yourself become closer to God and more fulfilled. Camp is also a great way to

make life-long friends and participate in activities that you love. It is a very fun and rewarding experience.

- As evening program director, I put a lot of work into these programs. After our Friday night program I learned that one boy who usually had a hard time paying attention had sat and absorbed the whole thing and afterward said, "Wow! Isn't Jesus beautiful!" Statements like that make all the work worth while.
- A few summer's back I was counseling and I remember a Friday night devotion with my teen campers very vividly. We had been greatly sharing the impact of the evening program and a few girls asked how to grow closer to Christ. They basically poured their hearts out to one another and I just remember a feeling of comfort from the Holy Spirit as we shared with one another and as we prayed for further guidance in our lives. It's a beautiful thing to see how the spirit leads at camp.
- On the first morning of teen camp, I was assigned to sit out in Girl's village and make sure that all the girls were okay and that they stayed in their cabins until reveille while the rest of the staff were in staff worship. I was sitting at a picnic bench reading my Bible when I noticed a girl come out of her cabin and get her towel off of the clothesline. 'o no' I thought to myself, the first camper that I have to tell the rules to... She walked towards the bathhouse and passed me on the way asking timidly "are we allowed to be up yet?" I quickly realized that this was not a deliberately disobedient camper, but rather she was just an inexperienced 1st time camper. I kindly told her that no, she wasn't supposed to be up and that in 15 minutes, the reveille would sound and then she could go to take a shower. As I said that to her, the thought crossed my mind 'well, why don't you ask her if she'd like to come and read the Bible with you?'. So before I knew it I was asking her if she had brought a Bible to camp and if she wanted to come and read it with me. She readily agreed and ran to get her Bible. We read a little bit in Matthew about the Beatitudes and she was full of questions. God gets all the glory for the answers that I gave her. We had just about finished up the little passage and reveille sounded. Girls from every cabin burst through the door running for the showers, but this camper didn't. She stayed with me and read the last verse, finished the last thought, and prayed with me. I was truly shocked, but whispered a thought prayer to God, 'please bless her for her patience, politeness, and sincerity, and please let her get a shower before they are all taken.' Elated, I wished her a good day and said that I would see her around. I walked back to the staff lodge high on the love and the power of Jesus, wanting to share the previous few minutes with everyone that I saw. It turns out that this young girl was in my swimming class all week long. I got to know her a lot better over the week. She was dealing with a lot of emotional problems as her mother left her and her sister with their father when they were young. Their father remarried but had kids of her own. This girl and her sister were not given nearly as many hugs, kisses or love from their step-mom. Their dad wasn't around much either for them to be loved by. Yet, in all this pain and hardship, she was the most pleasant person to be around. God's love shone through her in everything that she did. We became good friends as the week progressed and I thank God so much for the opportunity that He gave me to be a blessing and be blessed. As camp staff, one is given great opportunities for growth in sharing and in receiving. Praise God that he picked us humans to share the good news of the gospel!
- Just the way you feel in the early mornings looking out over the beautiful lake and surrounding area and thinking how amazing it is that God made such a place! It's especially amazing when you experience this before the kids wake up.
- I was a summer camp counselor for the first time, never having worked at camp before either. I was really worried about how to relate to the kids and how to help them have a good time and learn more about God. There were times that I was stressed out during the weeks but I always finished each week of camp with this amazing feeling of accomplishment and having a unique impact on my kids lives. It was wonderful.
- This past summer, another staff member was talking with the teens on their first day at camp. She asked a girl who had attended camp for several years what classes she was taking. The girl said she would be taking several different classes, including

horsemanship, where I worked. She then stated that she always took horsemanship. When the staff member asked her if she had thought about maybe trying something different, she said no. When the staff member asked her why she always took horsemanship, she said, "I like horses, the horse barn, and I really like to be around [me]." I had never really thought I had given her that much attention, and honestly in past years she had annoyed me at times. When I heard this story, I was amazed at how God had been using me in spite of myself to reach out to this girl.

- I felt the majority of the staff always working together. We weren't getting paid very much, and it was hard work, long hours, but people were there for each other, and through those relationships I felt I could see a part of God that I hadn't really seen before.
- Besides helping campers come closer to Jesus, you can't help but find God for yourself. Daily worships, group prayers, immersion in the glory of nature, and the permeating Christ-centered mentality of all of my fellow staff members led me to not only a deeper and more wholesome but a more personal relationship with my Creator.
- As a kid, I idolized the staff. They showed me committed, contemporary Christianity--a real and dynamic faith. I chose to work at camp in the hope of passing on to other kids that which camp gave to me as a kid.
- Not only did I get the chance to show kids God but in doing so you yourself begin to realize just how amazing His plans for your life are. It's a eye-opening experience.
- I worked in the kitchen there and it has be very helpful for the work I now do as well as my time helping on mission projects.
- I have never been so happily busy 18 hours a day in my life! God seems so close there! The other staff are the most Christ-like people you could ever choose to be with - definitely the remnant. For younger people, there are so many opportunities to develop your leadership skills and use your talents!
- Camp was something that I counted the days for well before I was old enough to be a staffer. When I was hired, the joy of responsibility for myself and for others was liberating. I knew that every decision I made would impact other people's lives. I appreciated being chosen for leadership roles within the daily program. This certainly set the tone for professional success later in life.
- I have never felt closer to God than during my time as camp staff at camp. The morning devotionals as camp staff and the evening campfires made such an impact on me.
- I remember getting to participate with outreach doing something I loved. It was always amazing to me to be able to make friends with these wonderful campers and have a chance to influence them for the positive and still make money for school at the same time. There are so many good things about camp. If it is not a ministry to you, it can be a great outlet for your personal ministry. It is also a place where you can meet and make lifelong friends for here and eternity. At the same time, it is fun. Playing games, doing skits, skiing, swimming and joking with other campers and staff--letting people see that a relationship with Christ is cool and fun.
- At Camp we like to put the most powerful drama on Friday night, when everyone is having a spiritual high. I was a counselor and had two girls break down and begin crying because they had never seen someone with so much love. They both gave their hearts Christ that night, and I got to experience that with them.
- As a child camper, Camp was my safe place. As a staff, it still was. I have never worked as long of hours in such a diverse environment for 12 weeks straight in any other field. I have never been more happy, focused, content, energized and fulfilled either. Camp showed me much about myself that I value deeply. The relationships that were created are still my closest friends. Summer isn't summer unless camp is involved somehow. It really is where God spends His summers.
- Wow, these next two questions are so hard to fill out, because there were so many experiences like that! There were so many "little" things that happened that are what

made up the big picture and that are what make me know I'm going back. I loved connecting with the campers which was hard, since I was laundry girl and then kitchen staff. There was one week, though, where there was a little camper that I really connected with; taught him to unicycle, encouraged him in swimming, told him stories, etc. Seeing the light in his eyes when he was learning new things as well as the appreciation in his grandmother's eyes pretty much made the whole summer for me. There is nothing like the feeling you get when you are reaching out to others. This applies to fellow staff as well. There were countless times when, on the spur of the moment, someone would grab me or vice versa and we would pray about our impact on the kids, about our relationship with God, or about something we were thankful for. It was moments like these that personally kept me going and strengthened my walk with God.

- At blind camp one year there was a little girl who started asking questions about God and the Bible - she'd never been exposed to it before. Just her desire to know God and to know that I could help her in her journey towards God was amazing.
- Camp was a foundational experience in growing as a musician. It allowed me to pursue a different kind of music, using lead sheets instead of sheet music. It grew me as a worship leader, and had a deep impact on my church involvement.
- I had girls that loved to sit and talk about God and the opportunities that they might have to get closer to Him. Many of the girls were trying to figure out a way to go to an Adventist school and we spent lots of time in prayer.
- Getting up early and skiing on a perfectly smooth lake.
- Summer camp definitely made me feel a part of the church and its mission. I became a part of a family other than my biological family and the relationship I thought I had with God became real. I was mentored by REAL men of God.
- I had an extremely troubled youth in my cabin one year. Growing closer to her and learning of her experience was really pivotal in my life.
- Seeing very clear answers to prayer about small things showed just how much God cares about each one of us.
- It's a great experience that helps you in your people-relations and helps you to learn how to work with the difficult and make the best of a bad day. It gives you an opportunity to reach out to people who have not had the experience with Christ that you have. You touch people (staff or guest) each day, whether with your words or with your smile or a hand on the shoulder in support, you are touching people daily!
- It was some of the best summers of my life.
- Not too long ago, I had come to a point where I felt so fed up with school that it was hard to even focus on going into the ministry. Then an opportunity arose that allowed me to work at a camp for a work, not camp, but another one. However, because of my time at camp, working at this camp for a week only brought back the flood of positive memories and re-awoke in me the desire to serve the church wholeheartedly in the hopes of finding young people who want to give their lives to Christ. Camp helped instill that deep desire in me, something that a brief contact with another camp brought back and stronger than ever. Even today I am constantly encouraging young people from all over the world to consider camp experience, whether as a camper or as a staff member. Often times I'm encouraging them to go to camp if they can make it happen.
- At summer camp I developed life-long friendships, memories of a lifetime, leadership experience, and a closer relationship to God. It's been more than 20 years since I was a camp counselor and the memories remain vivid.
- Not going to an SDA school working at camp gave me the fellowship of Christian students to keep me motivated in my conviction. Working at camp has given me the best friends of my life, and the Lord allowed me to meet my wife at camp as well.

- Seeing the children and all the blind people coming together and praising God as a unit. Seeing the sunsets and reminding ourselves that we are here for a greater purpose and it isn't ours or the camps.
- The friendships that I formed with other staff members are still such important aspects of my life, even today, over 20 years later.
- As a young college student, the fact that there are wonderful young people of the opposite sex was an experience that would definitely help someone make decision to become a staff member.
- "Sneaking out" with my teen campers, taking a crazy route, spy like, to the swimming pool where the lights were on and lifeguards were standing by. Many of my campers never figured it out.
- Outpost staff bonding was incredible. I learned so much each summer about nature, relationships, my own abilities and God. I would highly recommend the experience.
- A pastor did a seminar at camp for camp staff who were falling in love. His seminar on what true love is all about was instrumental in my future dating decisions.
- It develops communication and leadership skills that will serve one for the rest of one's life.
- At no time in my life was I ever so sure that I was doing God's will than during the summers that I was at camp. I remember a child who I wanted so badly to send home. He caused all sorts of problems. He even tried to shoot me with the archery equipment. We decided to give him one more day. That was Thursday. On Friday he was very intently watching the Friday night play. After the play he asked me if I was going to Heaven. I told him yes. He asked me if he had to be good to get to Heaven. I told him that he needed to love Jesus and that if he did, Jesus would make him want to be good. He asked me if the Tree of Life would have a mossy side the way trees in the woods do. I told him I didn't know, but it might. He asked me what I wanted to do when I got to Heaven. I told him that I wanted first and foremost to meet Jesus face to face. After that I wanted to talk to my angel. Then I wanted to reunite with family and friends. Just as we were settling into our tipi for the night he asked me one more question. He said he wanted to love Jesus, and that if he were good enough to make it to Heaven, would I meet him on the mossy side of the Tree of Life after I was done with all the other stuff I wanted to do. I answered as I held back tears, "You better believe I'll be there. In fact, I'll meet you first and we will go meet Jesus together." Ever since then, whenever I part ways with someone I tell them that story and say, "I'll see you on the mossy side."
- I was able to make lifelong friends who I hope to see in Heaven some day, and influence children in a very positive way.
- My summers at camp were the best summers of my life. I made amazing connections with people similar to me and learned how to have a better relationship with God. I also learned important skills and talents I didn't realize I had and that are now helping me in my career. The friendships I made working at camp will be lifelong.
- Blind camp was a moving experience. Learned much and learned to appreciate sight.
- A great way to see God use you in a tangible way to touch another life.
- Time and again I saw kids see God in a way they apparently never had before and saw them learn to look up to a fun Christian - something they had apparently never done before.
- There is no better place to serve others and God in the summer where you can have a lot of fun yourself.
- I have formed lasting friendships and gained many leadership skills as a result of working at camp. Working for blind campers helped me to understand those who are physically different, but want to be treated just like everyone else. They taught me more life lessons and helped me, more than I believe I helped them.

- I don't have a specific experience but I learned a lot about myself and I would do it all over again.
- The experience will help you to take ownership of your religious convictions and as a result, too, Jesus will become more of a personal Saviour.
- Working at summer camp opened the door to come into a closer relationship with Jesus which changed my life forever.
- It takes devotion to God, and others before self. It is demanding and could be a negative experience if you do not have the right "heart". Blind camp really brings out the love for others less fortunate.
- I have had the opportunity to help sponsor someone for a week at summer camp and hearing that camper share with others what an awesome time that they had and how their life was changed by this experience.
- I had a hard day and I wasn't in the best mood at all. As I was walking back from the beach, one of my buddies, who was 10 years old, gave me his favorite whistle because he wanted to make my day better. That right there should determine whether you should work at camp or not. Simple things we don't realize can make a huge impact on our life. Camp is one of those things.
- I once watched a green haired young woman go from completely hating anything having to do with God to loving Him with all her heart.
- Know what you want to experience that summer. If not you will catch yourself in a whole lot of trouble
- My director and his wife had more faith in me than I had in myself. Eddie called from Kansas to where I was in El Salvador as a student missionary to ask me to be the Food Service Director. I was shocked and scared but both of them believed I could do it. It was a rich, exciting experience to be that director and even though I made mistakes, I always knew those two believed in me. They made me believe in myself.
- Every morning staff worship!
- It is a great opportunity to immerse yourself with people who are trying to walk closer to God and to just have a good time. Not only that but it's a break from the norm, no one who's worked at camp can say it was a normal 2 months. It's the most fun you will ever have if you put your heart into it.
- Time when teen camp went through the agape supper and their turn about of spiritual presence.
- It showed me that both my strengths and weaknesses can impact lives.
- Those summers working at camp were my busiest and hardest, but I would do it all again. All of the staff got so close, we were really a team that was there to serve God.
- Creating amazing friendships with other staff and with Jesus. Having that spiritual environment every day really strengthened my spiritual life.
- Hearing a few campers tell another the importance of Jesus and getting to know Him better by learning about Him in church is something I will never forget.
- Working with a diverse group of individuals helped me to learn more about Christ and others
- It is an awesome experience. You have the opportunity to affect the young, growing minds with the message of Jesus. Some of the kids there have no clue who Jesus is, and you get the awesome opportunity to show Him to them.
- I loved the interaction that I had with fellow staff and campers.
- The friendships and the bonds that were formed during camp in my younger years remain some of the fondest of my entire life.
- I looked forward each year to Blind Camp. It was a time during the summer like no other. My first experience with Blind Camp, I was scared and uneasy. I didn't know how to treat

people who, I felt, were so different from myself. I remember walking with them, talking with them, and through my time spent realizing that they were teaching me and helping me grow into a better person. They told jokes, got me laughing hysterically, and sang songs with no evidence of embarrassment or self-consciousness. It helped me to let go of some of those feelings I was holding on to--to protect myself from feeling badly in front of others. I realized that we can all love and support each other no matter what we are like physically and despite our self loathing. It is what we hold inside--our character and our spirituality that really matters and what helps to bring us together . . . through Christ. Every year after that first one, I looked forward to Blind Camp, because it was a reminder of the love Christ has for us and how He can make perfect what sin has tainted.

- I can't remember a specific experience, but I loved being part of a team and feeling like I was needed and important. It was the first time I ever experienced that. I came from a less than ideal home situation and camp opened my eyes and gave me hope for the future.
- Camp director encouraged me to go into Youth Ministries.
- I can't go a summer without being involved in some way or another...I've been going to camp since I was six and working there since I was 15. It's just a part of my existence.
- My peers presenting morning devotionals. I was always happy to see and hear young people being as loyal to God as I was.
- It was an awesome experience, and working with the kids is very fun, you learn so much from them! You also feel good about yourself in helping the kids learn more about God, and teaching them all the camp songs, which are also very cool.
- I was out on a mountain bike ride with some of the kids one day and one boy was riding a little bit too hard for his skill level. He got a little bit out of control on one section and crashed. I felt really bad for him, but at the same time I enjoyed the look on his face when I put a couple of band-aids on him and asked if he would be okay. He just gave a little grin and hopped right back on his bike! That is what camp is about.
- It is hard work and the pay is not as much as if you were to work at a fast food area, but reaching out to the people and showing Christ to them is the biggest reward ever.
- It's an amazing experience both personally for yourself and what you can give of yourself to both campers and your fellow staff. Camp has the ability if you wish to see it to tell you much about yourself where you are strong and where you need grow. It also opens people up both staff and campers- its a great place to learn how to be completely real and always hopefully then take into life where you need to have your beliefs and realness about yourself and Jesus set so you do not stumble when you encounter those harsh experiences that can rattle you especially if you do not have those beliefs about God solid in your life.
- I got to tell a boy about the plan of salvation. It was so cool because the Holy Spirit kept bringing verses to my mind as I was talking with him. If that was the only positive thing that had ever happened at camp (which it is definitely not!) it would make everything worth it!
- Being a camp staff is about a mission to reach out to young people and show them Jesus. When you have a young person come up to you and ask about your Jesus, someone who doesn't even believe there is a God, and then after time at camp and hearing about your Jesus they come up to you with tears in their eyes and say, "I think I'm going to give your God a try". That is what camp is about, camp is about putting everything else aside in life and living for one purpose and one purpose alone, to give each and every young person at camp their best chance to see Jesus.
- There was an atheist at our camp and we showed the Lighthouse video and she decided that she believed in God. It was cool.
- Summer camp for the most part has been the best times of my life. I would encourage anyone and everyone to work for God at camp at least once. It's fun and even more so it's easy to see God working in your life as well as other campers and staffs'.

- I was talking with the girls in my cabin one night and they were talking about ghosts and such. I opened the Bible and talked about how Lucifer had rebelled and that it was with him that sin and bad things came. It was really cool to be able to share with the campers something from the Bible and help them grow so they understand that there is an evil power out there, but God is stronger. I explained to my girls that even if there are demons, God is stronger and can protect us.
- Having kids ask you questions and being able to answer them and bring them close to Christ is very rewarding.
- I went into camp thinking simply about what summer camp could do for me. But seeing the looks on the kids faces during worships and hearing them talk about how neat it was that we were Godly AND cool really brought it home that I was there to minister to God's kids. Don't get me wrong, camp isn't an easy job, but it is one of the most rewarding experiences I've ever had.
- Being on staff is like being a part of a group that is similar to the early church. You are tight, you support each other, you are working toward a common goal, you are all (pretty much) giving it all you've got. It is like being part of a very close-knit family.
- Camp cannot be described in an event so much as a process. The personal transformation received from camp is one that will last a lifetime. The change in becoming a leader instead of a follower enables you to become not only a better person, but a better Christian. Working at camp is definitely one place where people can feel their best, be their best, find out who they really are and become who they want to be. Camp offers a perspective of the church that perhaps some are blinded to. At camp you can truly see God.
- Personally, Camp is the place to be. Teaching kids about God is an amazing adventure, not only for them, but for you as an employee as well.
- One of the ladies at camp was going to commit suicide and then decided against it after watching a skit in which I played the death part. It was moving to know I had direct influence on such a catastrophic event.
- It is a great experience to be able to minister the word of God to children. One of my campers gave his life to Jesus after our Friday night program because he felt touched by the message.
- I think spending time in conversation and getting to know the kids out on the water was crucial. Letting them know me as I get to know them were some of the greatest times.
- When I went to camp I became certified in life guarding, boat driving, and wild land firefighting. All of these are amazing skills to have that I can use now and later on.
- My fellow staff members inspired me and lead me closer to a relationship with Jesus than anyone before and because of that my attitude changed and I was able to lead other people close to Christ.
- At camp, the activity staff stays after campfire every night and sings and prays together. Camp is such a spiritual place and you are uplifted by people who want the same thing as you do, a strong relationship with God. My mission in life, thanks in big part to camp, is to serve. I am currently serving as a Student Missionary in Honduras, teaching 2nd grade.
- More than one person came up to me during my experience at camp asking me tough but honest questions about the Bible, and/or telling me how I have touched their life spiritually. That made camp for me, cause I believe that's what we are all about at camp.
- Camp, while it may be difficult at times and not a very high paying summer job, is probably one of the best experiences you can get. The kids will teach you so much.
- Overall, everyone was nice. There was great people there and it feels great to effect a child's life.

- It was the most amazing experience I've ever had. It is the most exhausting, but the most rewarding job I have ever had. Serving kids for the Lord is the greatest ministry you will ever be able to be involved in.
- I loved working at summer camp. Although intense at times, I enjoyed getting to know all those around me. The piece that kept me coming back year after year was sharing God's message with campers. I was the director of horses and loved to show campers how we can learn about our walk with God through these animals. At the end of the week it brought tears to my eyes when the campers would look at their horse with tears in their eyes while telling me the lessons their horse taught them.
- During our final week of kids camps, I was having an extremely difficult time with one of my campers who had a mild form of autism. God would give me the strength for each battle, but afterwards I would be exhausted and tearful. Throughout this time, my fellow staff were so supportive, loving, and prayerful, and not only did I see Christ's power working in them, but in the difficult child as well. By the end of the week she had become more cooperative, and most importantly, I felt strengthened and filled with courage.
- As the weeks would end kids would come up to me and give me hugs and say that they were really going to miss me and that they couldn't wait until next year to see me again.
- You can feel God work. Passion play every week, there were kids, non-Adventist kids asking questions, wanting to know more. And I had the privilege of answering some of them, and I know they really thought about what they saw on Friday night about Jesus' love.
- Every Friday night after a very moving campfire we take our cabins out on the lawn by the lake and sit around a mini fire. I never know what I am going to say to my cabin until I get there, but I always pray for God to speak through me and He never fails. One week in particular I gave a testimony around the fire and shared how I had not grown up in a Seventh-Day Adventist home but still found Jesus and had a close relationship with Him. As a counselor it made my eyes water to hear from my girls that over half of them were also from non-SDA homes and wanted so desperately to go to church. We came up with a solution that one of the other girls who went to church every week could take the others with her. I pray for them quite often but have not kept in touch. These are the stories that keep me at camp and craving for more experiences like this with the girls that I encounter.
- During cub camp week we had a girl go home because of homesickness. The next Sunday she came back up with her family to drop her brother off for the next week of camp and ran over and gave me a giant hug... she said she missed me sooo much (and she'd only been gone for about 3 days!!!) It was so sweet.
- The most meaningful thing that happened to me this summer was being able to really bond with my "cabin family"; general staff members were assigned to help counselors at night, etc. And just connecting and talking, sharing stories by flashlight, singing... some of them really opened up. I can't think of a single specific moment, but I would just say that camp opens doors for you to make unimagined connections. Also, I only realize in retrospect how much the songs, messages, and memories of camp mean to me - like loose fitting clothes that I'm continually growing into. Just as starlight takes years to reach our eyes, sometimes, we awaken to what God has been trying to introduce into our consciousness after the fact.
- A couple families who donated large sections of money for our new challenge course were at family camp. We put in some extra time to let them experience the challenge course. The first day that we did it, it was raining the entire time but we had so much fun bonding time facilitating the group and seeing all of their enthusiasm for life and the team.
- Several, can't narrow this one down. The tears of children in my cabin when I had to leave halfway through a week of camp. How that impressed upon my mind the impact I was making in a child's life. Seeing the change in a group of kids after a powerful

presentation of the story of Christ. Spending time outside on a Saturday night with a group of teen campers and a couple of guitars, listening to the singing coming from a group that wouldn't even open their mouth to sing one note at the beginning of the week. In summary, seeing a change in the lives of the children and youth that came; knowing there was a difference between the person that arrived one Sunday and left the next.

- Being a staff member at a summer camp is usually a great experience. You will learn volumes about working with peers and with children. Just be careful to pick the right camp.
- Nothing can beat influencing young people to give their hearts to Christ.
- There is nothing more exhilarating or humbling than to be a part of the one picture of Jesus some kids will ever see.
- My summer camp experience has helped me learn and grow throughout my years of working there. I have had some of the best times working at camp. I think that I've learned to rely more on Jesus because of working at camp. Camp taught me how to be a more effective spiritual leader.
- Before camp I was kind of going back and forth between believing in God and not. After seeing everything He did for me because of camp, I am sure there is a God.
- It challenged me personally to develop my strengths and work on my weaknesses.
- Support staff singing on stage as/after the kids leave is one of the best experiences there is.
- I believe that I worked harder than many people and I took a lot of grief for my work ethic and my convictions about following the rules. However, I honestly believe that I did the best that I could and I believe that my camp director thought the same. I learned from this experience that when you do what you honestly feel is right, you usually are.
- Be ready to work yourself hard! Never before have I been so exhausted at the end of the week.. physically, mentally, emotionally..but God is so good! He strengthened and provided. It showed me how powerful and incredible my God is!
- I grew into the person I am today both because of my time spent as a camper at summer camp and because of the time spent as a staff at a summer camp.
- Camp is a wonderful way to enhance our view of God through nature.
- I had a camper from Russia who had never ridden a horse before and was very afraid to try. She was shy and didn't know English very well. God used me to allow this girl to overcome her fear and know that she could do it and she ended up loving riding. Who knows how that experience has impacted her life.
- For one week, you're given the chance to fully impact a child's life. I'm still in contact with campers who were in my cabin my first summer at camp--and that was five years ago!
- The director believed in my capabilities and gave me confidence to lead out by myself in the craft house.
- It will expose you to many good things. It gives you a chance to work hard and when you're done you will feel rewarded.
- I have met so many kids who do not know Jesus and who have a rough home life. These kids come to camp and they realize that there is a better life out there and that they can experience it. They realize that there are people out there who DO care about them. This makes such a huge difference in kids' lives and they want to know why I and the other staff are positive people. That, of course, is when we get to tell them about Jesus! And many kids make decisions to give their lives to Jesus because of that positive life that they experience at camp.
- Camp has been the best experience of my life thus far. I do not picture myself not working at camp at least for the next four years. I think I made a difference in some

campers, even though I was working in the kitchen. I remember many experiences in which I found myself in dish room in front of everyone, and then many of the campers stopped and said hi to me. That made me feel important, it made me feel that I was something. Just a simply hi by other stuff or campers. You can be the difference to a lot of kids from any position that you are at. It does not matter. Also, I still remember the theme of my summer camp, "the heart of a hero". I will always remember this theme, it changed my life. God is good and camp is place that God wants us to be.

- I think of camp as one of the many strongholds of God to convey His message of love through all the camp activities. The presentation of Jesus, either through the activities, worship times or the constant attitude of service is vital for the spreading of the Gospel and making God real to the children
- It is definitely a great experience. It is amazing to be part of a staff body that all have the same goal: To minister to other people. It was amazing to be part of a team so dedicated to Christ and His work.
- At the beginning of the week there is usually a trouble maker, someone that just picks on other kids giving the counselor trouble. And I think it's the greatest when at the end of the week when that kid stands up at an alter call.
- Kids meet God here.
- Camp causes me to re-evaluate my life and realize what's truly important. This year, because of camp, I realized that I had fallen away from God because of my relationship with my boyfriend. Once I realized this, I ended the relationship, and I really think I wouldn't have done that if I hadn't come to camp.
- I was a counselor at camp and one of my campers goes to the same church as I do. His brother told me that after he got home from camp that Shawn (my camper) wouldn't stop singing and had his hair cut the same way as me. Before, Shawn would rarely sing in church and school, but now he is doing much more. It makes me smile just to know that God used me.
- When I first started working there, I felt really out of my element. After I found my niche, things started getting better and I had the time of my life.
- You deal with kids all the time who don't know God or who haven't had a good experience when dealing with Christians...there was a kid out at RAD camps that grew to trust me throughout the week- I didn't push any religion on him, but just asked and he was open to talk. At the most random times, he would ask me questions about Jesus and what I believed. By the end of the week on the three-hour bus ride back to camp, he came and sat by me, away from his friends and their laughter, to ask me more questions about the SDA religion. I had NO answers! Thank God though, there was a Bible teacher there volunteering that week and he was able to answer what I couldn't. The bottom line is that God WORKS at camp in ways that you can plainly see if you pray for it. God moves the hearts of kids in incredible ways and it truly draws a person closer to him.
- During one break, a coworker and I sat by the lake and talked about how important living deeply and passionately is important. It was nice to have deep conversations like that with the other camp staff.
- The campers all around totally look up to you. They react to your every move. So it's amazing when you, trying to be a good example, can see results in your campers. They're not all like that, but enough to make me think about why I'm doing things, and why I want them to do things.
- Meeting new staff and being able to relate to someone your age is a positive experience. Knowing that there are young adults your age going through the same thing you are somehow makes you feel more confident in your own life.
- Working at camp is really just an experience for big kids to go to camp. It is the most fun job you can have, you work with amazing people and the central theme is living Jesus' love and showing it to kids, and this is the most beneficial thing you could do.

- I made friends I'd never would have had otherwise and I expect we'll be friends for life
- Just being able to be with the staff and grow spiritually in staff worships.
- Summer camps are the best. You get to have fun with staff and kids, play in the sunshine, grow closer to God, and get paid to do it.
- I became friends with so many Christ-loving people. I would love for all of my friends to be surrounded by the amazing staff at camp so they would get a chance to see what God is like.
- I remember baptisms during teen camp. Seeing so many amazing teenagers suddenly fall in love with Christ was one of the most amazing experiences I've had.
- Summer camp provided a way to experience God outside of our busy, distracting society.
- Camp is an amazing environment. There is no place like it. You will be shaped and changed, grow closer to God, and have a blast.
- This summer I worked as part of the challenge course staff. We decided to hold an early morning Bible study with a chance to rock climb. We anticipated limited interest from both the campers and the staff. After we proposed it, though, we saw a lot of interest. Every morning a different staff member shared a little of their personal testimony and campers continued to come and invite their friends. I can speak for the staff when I say that we had lots of fun climbing in the morning and each of us was blessed by the bible studies. On Sabbath, when an alter call was held, I was glad to see some of our interests make a stand. I cannot say it was all because of a short study, but I am sure it did make an impact.
- I lead the music for camp and watched the kids grow from day one and saw them being "cool" and not singing and by the middle of the week they were excited about singing and having fun with God. I kept watching this one girl that would put her hood on and dark sunglasses all during the music and just stare... On the last night of camp she had taken her hood off and her sunglasses and was quietly crying as she mumbled the words of the songs.. that's what camps all about, breaking down walls and building bridges to a better, eternal future.
- It was song time and we were singing away when I noticed one of the campers crying. When I asked him, "What's up man?" He just said "Jesus died for me." All I could say was, "Yeah, isn't that so cool!" To see a child get it is incredible and to be a part of that process is a huge opportunity.
- It's so hard to think of just one experience...I love how at the end of every week, though you've had to convince the kids to do some things, they loved every minute of it :)
- Well, I would have to say that working at camp is the funniest things you could do. The director and assistant director are awesome. The camp staff in general is awesome. There are so many experiences I could share. But it's been fun seeing kids smile and just having the time of their life and being able to be the part of that is just sweet.
- Seeing and being a part of a child's decision of accepting Christ and being baptized. There's nothing better.
- I'm not the type of person who openly shares my faith with others, nor am I the type of person who is comfortable leading out in Bible studies. But, working at camp can change your life. One week I had some girls in my cabin who knew basically nothing about Christianity or even God. She knew who Jesus was, but knew nothing about Him. I never had encountered this experience before so it was exhilarating cracking the Bible open to Genesis and showing someone God for the very first time. She was in complete awe with Creation and just couldn't stop reading the Bible. I actually had to have her stop reading so that she could pay attention during line call! Working at summer camp was just one of the most amazing things I've ever done in my life. You learn to trust in God completely and you discover abilities that you never thought you had.

- Over the years, I've run into young adults who were campers at my camp, and they've told me about something that made an impact on their life today. That's pretty mind-boggling to me, and humbling.
- Camp is a family. It creates a friendly environment to grow and learn, both about life and spirituality. There is nowhere else that you can have so much fun learning about Christ and making new friends.
- I walked my teen campers out to the large cross at the edge of the meadow just before Friday's sunset. I had planned to share this "cabin vespers" with another cabin and counselor, but they were running late, so, on a whim I asked my campers to find a place to sit down that was at least ten feet from each other. I told them they could pray or sing or do whatever they liked, just as long as they weren't distracting the others. Though I told them I'd call them back in 7 to 10 minutes, it turned into 20. And by the time I had gathered them together, they were asking for more time! All of my campers seemed to have enjoyed the quiet time, and appreciated the fact that they regularly don't get that time alone with God. Two of my campers were quite moved and resolved to start a closer relationship with Jesus. After that, we had a walking "popcorn" prayer as we attempted to make it to line call before they dismissed everyone to campfire. As the prayers ended, one of my campers started singing a song, and we all joined in, singing two more before we made it to campfire. To me, this experience shows how God uses tranquil, natural places, role models (peers and staff), and a concentrated exposure of praise and devotion to reach another teenage boy and reveal how personal and real He really is. Becoming a summer camp staff member means you get to be that role model and watch as God works through and around you. Is that not exciting?
- Simply put, God will encounter you wherever you are. He will find you and hunt you down. And so, working at camp won't necessarily bring about an experience by which you can draw closer to God. That said, camp is an environment in which God can work with you if you allow Him to. This past summer I worked with some of the best staff and people that I have ever known because of their ability to allow God to come to them and work in their lives. Truly, the Holy Spirit was free to move throughout most all of the staff throughout the duration of summer, enabling and encouraging us to draw closer to each other in love, hence, closer to Him.

(This summary is a representative selection of the categories analyzed by way of content analysis. Duplications and similar statements have been eliminated from the list for economy.)*